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## COVER

A casual encounter or a final one? Cover artist E. M. Gooch has created a haunting image of an alien hunter and his long-tusked mount, deep in a fog-shrouded forest.



# LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

## Word from Israel...

Dear Dragon,

In issue #152, you presented a god named "Ramat Gan" [in "In Quest of Adventure," page 54]. Well, it sounds nice, but it is the name of a city in Israel. By the way, the name means "a plateau of gardens." Doesn't ring like "Light Bringer," does it?

In issue #158, you've published an article called "Also Known As . . . the Orc." In this article, you mentioned a language called "Jewish." I'm sorry to tell you, but there isn't such a thing as a Jewish language! The "Jewish" language is called Hebrew.

The above article didn't mention many Hebrew monster names, like the ones that follow:

Elf: Ben lilit (male), bat lilit (female)

Dwarf: Gamad, gamdaii

Faeries: Feyah, shafirrit

Gnome: Nanass

Demon: Shedon, mezick

Vampire: Arpad

Skeleton: Shaeled

Dragon: Derakon, leteah ma'chonefet (ch as in loch)

In spite of the above, the magazine is great.

Shay Ceasry  
Rehovot, Israel

I can't speak for the author of "In Quest of Adventure" (Greg Minter), so I'll simply guess that the choice of the deity's name in the article's example had nothing to do with the Israeli city of the same name. The deity's nickname of "Light Bringer" is still appropriate, given the god's particular ethics as described in the article.

In "Also Known As . . . the Orc," the label "Jewish" did not refer to a language; the word was among a group of endnotes showing the cultural origins of the monster names, as noted in the section, "How to use the AKA list." Several of the other names given in the endnotes on page 31 of that issue are not languages, either. However, your additional "AKA" names for AD&D® game monsters is much appreciated.

## . . . and Canada...

Dear Dragon,

In DRAGON issue #161, you ran an article on the ecology of the griffon. Assuming that many of the characteristics of the griffon were supposed to be based on eagles, some of them were incorrect. First, female birds of prey (raptors) are larger than males, because they need the

"room" to carry eggs. Also, raptors cannot see well in the dark. That is why a falconer puts a hood over his bird's head; without eyesight, the bird goes into a state of calmness bordering on stupor.

The major problem I had with the article was with the amount of damage a griffon can do. An average-sized hawk has enough strength in its grip to cut off the circulation in a person's arm, so a griffon should certainly be able to do more than 1-4 hp damage per foot! (Damage of 1-8 or 1-10 hp would be more likely.) Further, birds of prey generally do not attack with their beaks, which are used to cut up dead prey.

Finally, even through their wings are made up mostly of feathers, the strength of a blow [from a raptor's wing] would be more than enough to bowl someone over or even knock him out.

These may seem like nitpicky details, but it is just as easy to get things right as to get them wrong. Of course, it all depends upon just how much like eagles you think griffons are.

Dawn Nelson  
St. John's, Newfoundland

*A griffon is a mixture of eagle and lion, with a large dose of fantasy biology to boot. For example, the Monstrous Compendium notes that griffons screech like eagles and live in prides like lions, but they are also addicted to horse-flesh and can be trained by humans to be loyal mounts. I would say that griffons are as much like eagles as the DM wants them to be.*

*Nonetheless, you do make interesting points about the damage done by a griffon's foreclaws and wing buffet. Most griffons are shown with thin forelimbs (perhaps accounting for the low damage assigned to those claws), but the article in issue #161 opts to make the forelimbs stronger. A DM could create a new species of griffon (the "royal griffon") that does 1-10/1-10/2-16 hp damage, which seems reasonable. A wing buffet could do 1-6 hp damage (like a club) per wing, with a dexterity check on 4d6 required for man-sized-or-smaller victims to avoid being knocked down. The rear-claw rake, mentioned under "Game information" in "The Ecology of the Griffon," could also be uprated to do 2-8/2-8 hp damage if the foreclaws catch larger-than-man-sized prey.*

*Of course, these changes will make the new griffon a terrifying opponent, one that even 12th-level characters will not enjoy meeting. (I once killed off a whole group of adventurers with one old-style griffon when I was DMing.) Horses, of course, will be very unhappy with the "royal griffon," and even dragons will be wary of griffon prides.*

## . . . and Berkeley

Dear Dragon,

I really appreciate your printing the article "The Mind of the Vampire" in the Halloween issue (#162). I always had a sort of sympathy for

*Continued on page 68*

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# EDITORIAL

## I was a teenage TSR game junkie

Okay, I admit it. I was a TSR junkie. Back in high school, I played in two gaming groups. In one group, we played the D&D®, GAMMA WORLD®, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ games. The other group played the AD&D® and TOP SECRET® games, an occasional STAR FRONTIERS® game, and the DAWN PATROL® board game. I almost began playing other games on several occasions, but I never did. I'm not sure now whether it was a conscious decision to play only those games or not, but I suppose some degree of "game snobbery" was involved.

As you've noticed, every game we played was (or is) produced by TSR, Inc. That's not bad—we had great fun playing those games, and I still enjoy them and their descendants today.

But, in the year and a half that I've worked here at TSR, I've discovered a plethora of RPGs from other companies that are just plain cool. So, since this DRAGON® Magazine's feature section is on non-TSR games, I thought now would be the perfect time to mention some of the best such games I've found. I've broken them down by genre, and I'll describe why I think each one of them is terrific.

The intention of this editorial is to broaden your gaming horizons a little. The AD&D and D&D games are great, as are all the games TSR publishes. They are not, however, the only games worth playing. (Did I really say that?)

Science fiction: My favorite nuts-n-bolts, hard-SF game is GDW's MEGA-TRAVELLER\* game. It's a tried-and-tested system with detailed character generation and obscenely simple task resolution. Also, the wealth of background information on the Third Imperium (a good portion of our own Milky Way galaxy) will really capture the imaginations of the players and the GM, affording your party limitless adventuring possibilities. This system is very complete and well defined. Be warned, though, that combat here is lethal. If you like galaxy-spanning gaming, this system is for you. For more on this game, see "Role-playing Reviews" in DRAGON issue #141.

But, if you prefer "space opera" to hard SF then try STAR WARS\*: The RPG, by West End Games. If you've seen the movies, you know the background of this action-packed universe. The game's designers set the game just after the events in the film Star Wars, but knowledge of the other films won't interfere with your enjoyment of the game. A unique facet of this game is that a character's basic attributes aren't set numbers: Your PC's strength might be 3d6, while your percep-

tion is 2d6 + 1. It's an interesting, flexible concept that works well in the game, since all skills are attribute based. Also, you can use Force Points to perform some truly heroic feats. For more, see "Role-playing Reviews" in issues #131 and #155.

An incredibly popular branch of SF gaming recently is the dark and deadly cyberpunk genre. My favorite system here is the CYBERPUNK 2020\* game, by R. Talsorian Games. This revision of the first true cyberpunk RPG has a lot going for it, not the least of which is the Lifepath section, which allows you to develop a detailed history for your PC. Combat, again, is deadly. Another important aspect of cyberpunk gaming is having that live-on-the-edge attitude, and the CYBERPUNK 2020 game has that attitude. For more on this game's first edition, see "Role-playing Reviews" in issue #149.

Horror: One of my all-time favorite games is the CALL OF CTHULHU\* game, by Chaosium, Inc. It is an adaptation of HP Lovecraft's mythos, and it's wonderfully handled. The core game is set in the 1920s, giving it a great atmosphere in addition to its truly bizarre beasts. By far, the most intriguing feature of the game is that, as your investigators encounter the alien monstrosities, they are slowly and inexorably driven insane. So alien and bizarre are these creatures that the mere human minds of the characters cannot cope with them. As you might expect, combat with many of these fiends is not often a good idea. But, if you enjoy a good scare and like wicked monsters, this game will give you a frighteningly good time. For more, see "Role-playing Reviews" in issues #124, #138, and #158.

For modern-day horror, try either edition of the CHILL\* game. Both the first edition by the now-defunct Pacesetter Games and the second edition by Mayfair Games are worth investigating if you're interested in battling the evil Unknown. This game allows you to battle traditional horrors like werewolves, vampires, and mummies, as well as many weirder ones. You're a member of S.A.V.E., an international agency with the objective of defeating these minions of the Unknown; you enter the fray with laptop computer and submachine gun. Use the Art, but beware of those who practice the Evil Way.

**Super heroes:** I recently began reading DC comics again (I got hooked after reading old copies of *The Crisis on Infinite Earths*). This event coincided almost perfectly with the release of the second-edition DC HEROES\* game, by Mayfair Games. This system is logical, smooth, and very well defined. Character generation is simple: You get a number of points from your GM, and you buy the powers and abilities you want. Combat involves some

chart checking, but it's quite simple. There is also a tremendous amount of background material, both on individual characters and on the DC universe in general. If you like the DC universe, you'll enjoy this game. For more, see "Role-playing Reviews" in issue #165.

If you're looking for a very detailed super-hero system, try the CHAMPIONS\* game, by Hero Games/I.C.E. The fourth-edition rulebook is huge, but it contains everything you need to run a super campaign. Be prepared to devote some time and effort to generating your PC, but the number of powers, advantages, and so on is truly impressive. Combat requires some number crunching, too, but the system is quite flexible. In fact, its flexibility is the strongest feature of the game. You can tailor the systems to the heroic or super-heroic power levels desired. Also, bring every six-sided die you own to a CHAMPIONS game—you'll need them. For more, read "Role-playing Reviews" in issue #162.

**Science fantasy:** This broad, catch-all category includes games that might fit into the SF category, but it made more sense to place them all together here. Each game does have some elements of science, but the science is blended into atypical SF settings. In each, there is some fantastic element that warps it beyond the realm of straight SE

The SPACE 1889\* game, by GDW, is a wonderful alternate history game with a richly detailed SF setting placed right in the middle of the Victorian era. Here the European countries of 1889 are colonizing not only Earth but (since Edison demonstrated that spaceflight is possible) Luna, Mars, and Venus as well. Character generation is simple, and combat is slightly more complex than in the AD&D game. I especially like the "cascade skills," wherein your skill in one area gives you a lesser skill in related areas of knowledge. This game is set in the age when science fiction itself was born. If you've ever enjoyed reading SF by Jules Verne or H.G. Wells, you should enjoy this game. For more, see "Role-playing Reviews" in issue #154.

The TORC\* game, by West End Games, is the first true "multi-genre" RPG that allows (and even encourages) PCs to move and play in more than one genre *with the same character*. The game also encourages PCs from different realities, or "cosms," to work together as a party would do in an AD&D game. The background that allows you to do this is inventive, innovative, and unusual; in fact, this game wins my "Most Bizarre Background" award. It's not bad by any means—just a little weird. The game systems work well, with the familiar West End character templates available but not mandatory, and with some interesting rules conventions to help you deter-



mine whether or not your laser pistol will work on a dragon. This is the game to try if you've always wanted to experiment with "genre-jumping." For more, see "Role-playing Reviews" in this issue.

The RIFTS\* game, by Palladium Books, also is a cross-genre game, but here magic, psionics, and SF high-tech all coexist side by side. The background is grim, with the Earth barely surviving a nuclear holocaust and the resultant transformation of the planet due to the psychic energy released by the dead and dying. Earth, in the game, is a patchwork of feudal baronies, military dictatorships, and vast wilderness areas, all with interdimensional rifts dotting the landscape. There are almost 30 character classes to choose from, including wizards, psychics, and mutants. This is a game on an epic scale, with a world in need of heroes. I highly recommend this game to any experienced gamer who can enjoy playing in a deadly world. For more, see "Role-playing Reviews" in this issue.

**Fantasy:** I've saved this category for last. Since the D&D and AD&D games are near and dear to the hearts of so many, I almost hesitate to mention other FRPGs for fear of giving offense. Remember that variety can expand one's horizons.

The ARS MAGICA\* game, by White Wolf (formerly Lion Rampant), is a terrific, magic-rich game. The setting is a fantasy version of medieval Europe, where faerie forests and many other legendary places

and beings exist. Play revolves around the covenant, a residence outside of civilization where the magi of the Order of Hermes and their friends and supporters live. Character generation is simple but a little time-consuming. Combat is somewhat slow, but the magic system is the highlight of the game. With provisions for formulaic and spontaneous spells, plus magical research and invention, this game covers magic thoroughly. If you enjoy running wizards, this game is for you. The presentation of this game is truly top notch. For more, see "Role-playing Reviews" in issues #147, #150, and #156.

But, if you prefer a grim, low-fantasy setting, the WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY\* game, by Games Workshop, is definitely worth a look. Into a loosely European-based setting are added elves, dwarves, halflings, and the wonderfully wicked skaven. But what makes this setting so grim is the Taint of Chaos. Under the icecaps, portals through time and space have collapsed, releasing the plague of Chaos into the world. It is against this force and its minions that the PCs must battle. Your PCs have dozens of "careers" to choose from in four basic classes. Your PC can even advance to other careers as he progresses. Combat is simple, perhaps too much so. There are few options and little detail. This setting is also a magic-poor world, but the game as a whole is *very* complete. Everything you need to

play comes in the 300+ page rulebook. If you want take a stab (sorry) at a great low-fantasy game, try this one. For more, see "Role-playing Reviews" in issues #124, #151, and #156.

I hope a few of these games spark some interest in you, whether you're a TSR junkie (like I was) or not. I recommend them all. None of them are perfect, but they all have elements that I like enough to put up with the occasional, clunky game mechanic. Even if you don't want to learn another set of rules, most of these games have background elements that would work well within TSR games of the same genre. Even these games, however, are not the only other ones on the market. There are many games out there that you may think are pretty great but that I know nothing about. If you play a game like that, write and tell me about it. Broaden those gaming horizons—stretch that imagination!

*Dale A. Donovan*

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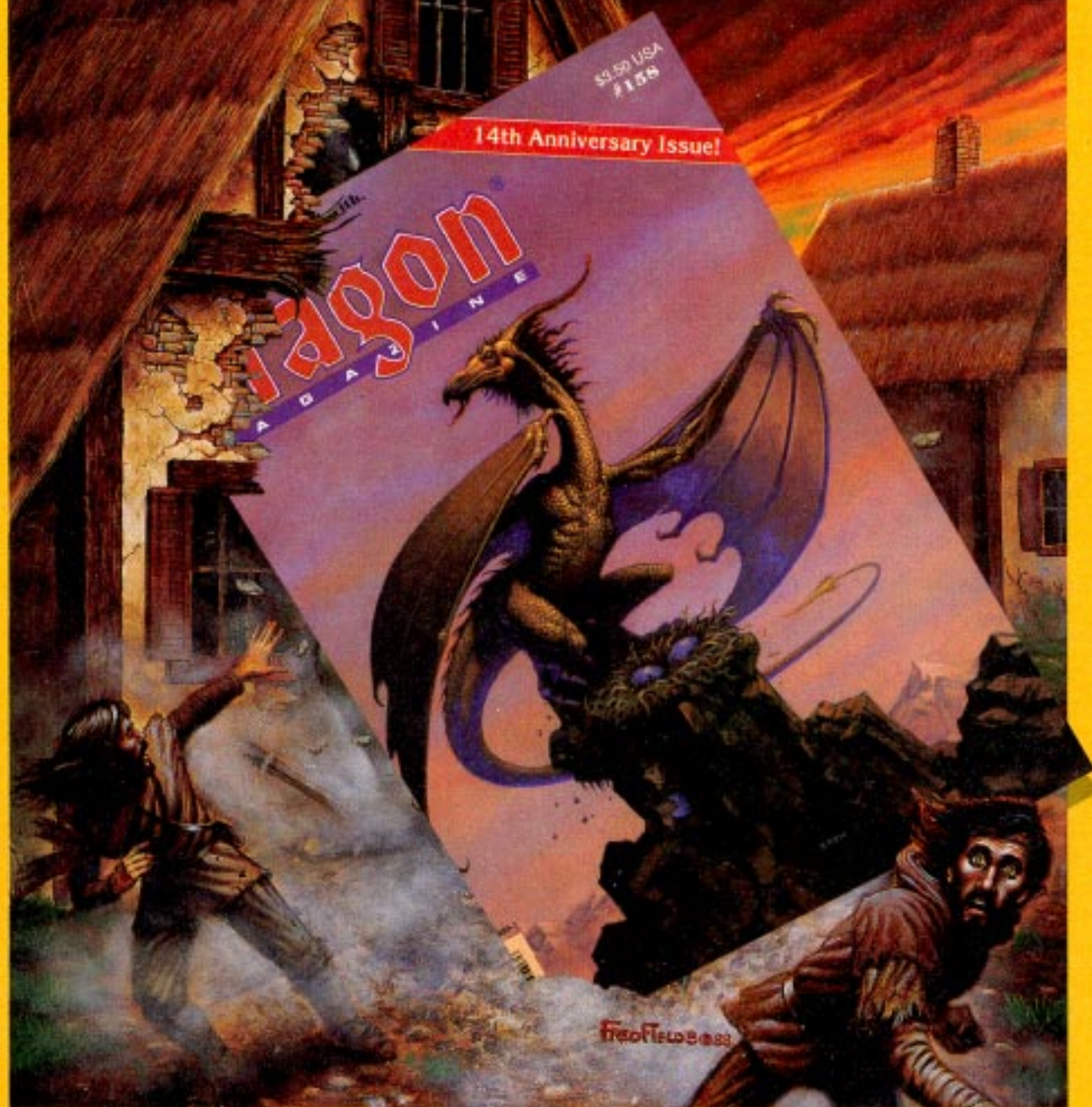
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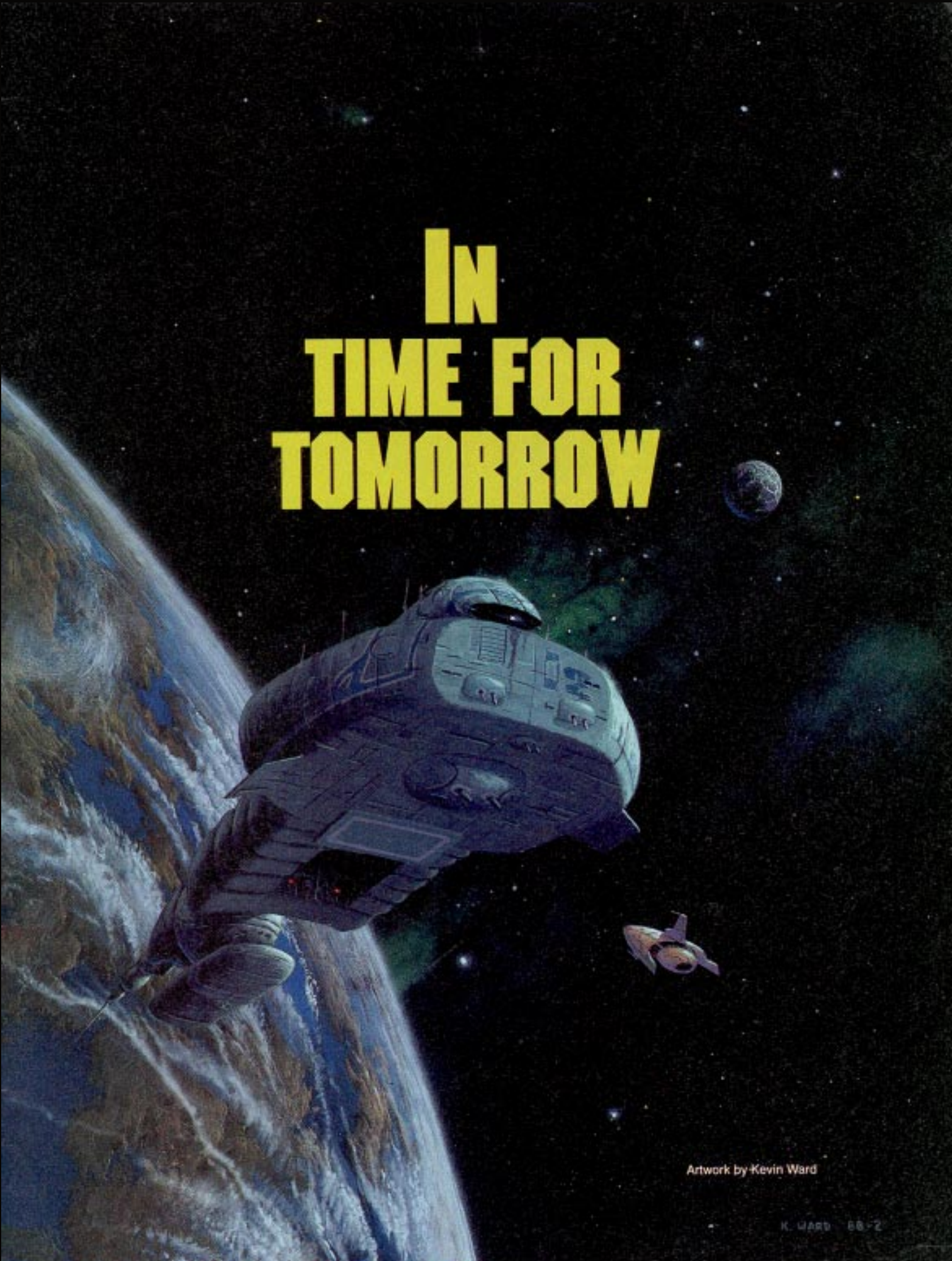
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# IN TIME FOR TOMORROW



Artwork by Kevin Ward





# WIRED AND READY

Running a cyberpunk-style RPG campaign

©1991 by Michael LaBossiere

Artwork by Tom Dow



A cyberpunk game campaign is quite different from standard science-fiction role-playing and is worlds away from most fantasy role-playing. To be successful in running a cyberpunk campaign, you will need to develop new methods and styles of game mastering. This article discusses how to prepare and run a cyberpunk-style campaign. While I have GDW's 2300 AD\* system (*Earth/cybertech Sourcebook*) and R. Talsorian's CYBERPUNK\* game in mind as I write, the discussion should benefit those who run other systems (such as FASA's SHADOWRUN\*, Iron Crown's CYBERSPACE\*, and SJG's GURPS\* Cyberpunk games). The cyberpunk genre is a dark and violent realm and tends to be more adult oriented than other role-playing universes. This is not to say that you will not enjoy it, but cyberpunk is not to everyone's taste.

## Background

A "pure" cyberpunk campaign occurs in a terrifying world in which the good guys are often far worse than the bad guys of other worlds. It takes place in a nightmare near-future landscape of filthy city streets, back alleys, corporate techno-towers, and urban battlefields populated by half-human/half-machine beings, drug dealers, psychos, frightened citizens, corrupt officials, and black-market operators. This is a futuristic world in which morality as we know it has died or gone into hiding. If you are unfamiliar with cyberpunk games and wish to understand such a world well enough to be able to run a good campaign, you will need to do a little research. I suggest the following:

1. Acquire and read novels and stories from the cyberpunk and related SF genres, particularly the following: *Neuromancer*, *Count Zero*, *Burning-Chrome*, and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, by William Gibson (must reading); *Hardwired* and *Voice of the Whirlwind*, by Walter J. Williams; *A Plague of Demons*, by Keith Laumer; *When Gravity Falls*, by G. Alec Effinger; *Damnation Alley* and "Home is the Hangman," by Roger Zelazny; and the anthologies *Machines That Kill* and *The Future of War*.

2. Watch the following films, which get across some of the feel of typical cyberpunk or near-future SF settings (most are available on video tape): *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Terminator*, *Aliens*, *Max Headroom*, *Mad Max*, *The Road Warrior*, *Overdrawn at the Memory Bank*, *Robocop*, *Brasil*, *Runaway*, *Blade Runner* and *Escape from New York*.

3. Look at such magazines as *Aviation Weekly*, *Popular Science*, *Omni*, *Discover* and *Guns and Ammo* if you like to be up on the latest in weaponry and science (without becoming an expert). These are all good sources of useful information and offer lots of ideas for new equipment. Most of these magazines are available at the library and in most grocery and department stores.

4. Since most cyberpunk games take

place on Earth, a good source of geographical information and maps can be found in *The World Almanac*. Further, considering the massive size of modern and future cities, it is very useful to find and use real-world city maps, available from the AAA or your local gas station. If you want to map out your own megacities, these maps will give you examples to follow.

## Organizing a campaign

What follows are several topics that are essential to the running of a good game. I usually have a folder or binder dedicated to each major area. This organizes the material and speeds play by avoiding misplacing material.

**Campaign world:** The campaign binder is a place to keep your notes about what is going on in your campaign world. These notes will be about: historical, political, social, and economic events; personalities; organizations and gangs; and other world-specific information.

The content of your campaign is up to you. You can use the world that is provided with the game you buy, you can make your own world, or even have a mixed campaign. Making your own world from scratch can be very rewarding but is very time consuming. Setting up your own world will require the following:

**History:** Since cyberpunk campaigns take place in the future, you need to decide what has happened between now and when the campaign starts. There is no formula about how to write a good history, but reading large amounts of science fiction and looking at examples from different cyberpunk games will be very helpful in writing your own. Rely on some common sense and develop an understanding of how certain events cause other events to occur. Developing a campaign history is important as it puts the adventures in the context of a coherent setting and makes them more real.

**Politics:** I get PCs involved in the politics of their world, but not everyone likes to do this. Still, the political structure of your world is important as it will determine much of what the characters can do and what will happen to them. For example, the consequences of possessing military arms is one thing in a police state and quite another thing in a situation of chaos and anarchy. Introductory texts on government and politics can be useful sources of how political structures work and what types there are. Some brief examples follow:

**Democracy:** Rule by the people. This sort of government is the most open and involves direct decision making by those governed. Characters will have much personal freedom and will be able to do what they want within the usually mild limits of the law.

**Republic:** Rule by representatives (as in the U.S.). Second only to democracy in the amount of personal freedom allowed, a republic gives characters the chance to do

what they want within the limits of the law. Republics often become corrupt if the representatives come to represent rich interests and not the people who elected them.

**Dictatorship/tyranny:** Rule by one man or group, often by direct seizure of power (as Julius Caesar did) or through legal means (as Adolph Hitler did). Most such governments are oppressive, as the ruler often feels he has power only to the degree that he can deny others their freedom. Characters who violate the (often irrational) laws will be severely punished. These are good governments for cyberpunk campaigns, as they give something for the player to hate and fight (or to love and serve).

**Police state:** Rule by the police or the military. These governments exist to insure "security," generally for the wealthy and the powerful. Those who are a threat to this security (often the PCs) will find their lives exciting (and short). These are good governments for the dark future (see *Brasil* and *1984*, as well as *The Running Man*).

**Corporate:** Rule by a government (usually a republic) that is actually run by major corporations. The result is a lot like feudalism, with corporate "lords" running the show. Each corporation has lawyers to run the government and corporate armies to back up its decisions. This setting is very appropriate for the cyberpunk genre (as in *Max Headroom* and *Robocop*).

**Anarchy:** This is the absence of authority. Different groups vie for power, but none dominate. In a particularly unpleasant future, the entire world may be in chaos (as in *The Road Warrior*); otherwise only small areas may be in chaos. Chaotic areas are good places to adventure, but you certainly wouldn't want to live there.

**Organizations:** Organizations are the "big actors" in the modern and futuristic worlds, and they can be important friends or enemies of the PCs. Some groups to consider in cyberpunk campaigns include:

**Corporations:** These organizations exist to make profits. They range in size up to huge multinational (or even multiplanetary) corporations controlling unthinkable amounts of cash and ruling the lives of millions. These are among the most powerful and active groups in the cyberpunk genre.

**Government organizations:** These range from the postal service to the national army, each serving the purposes of those who control the government. They may be friend or foe to the PCs, depending on what the PCs are doing. PCs will usually deal with police and intelligence agencies (and maybe the army, if the PCs are really rambunctious).

**Gangs:** These are very common in the cyberpunk genre and have names like "Panther Moderns," "American Nihilists;" and so forth. They range in character from local groups formed for neighborhood protection to heavily armed, cyber-enhanced psychos who slug it out with the



local police for control of the streets.

**Private organizations:** These range from environmental groups whose goal it is to protect the earth to private mercenary companies. Also in this category are political groups whose goals range from trying to get a leash law voted down to radical-terrorist/freedom-fighter groups out to overthrow the government. PC groups often fall into this latter category.

When creating a cyberpunk-game group, give it a definite purpose and record such factors as its size, power, influence, wealth, and resources. Also work out the game statistics for the average member as well as statistics for the important people in the group. Finally, note any special skills or equipment the group might have.

Groups can be used to motivate the PCs (by hiring or threatening them, for example), to provide resources and information, and sometimes to bail the PCs out of dangerous situations (but not too often, of course) or put them into said situations.

**Economics:** The basic law of campaign economics is: The more the players want it, the more it will cost. In general, rare and complex items (advanced weaponry, cybernetics, special software, etc.) are very expensive. Increases in demand and decreases in supply raise prices. Illegal and black-market items are outrageously expensive. Keeping the PCs poor and in need is a good way to motivate them (but don't keep them too poor—you don't want to destroy their interest). After all, why would a multimillionaire risk life and fortune in dangerous activities? Quests for special items also generate adventures. For example, consider an attempt to acquire some hot new ICE-breaking software (ICE: intrusion countermeasure electronics, computer programs to keep "hackers" out of mainframes). This involves dealing with the black market and thus means danger and conflicts with the law. Make the PCs pay for what they get, either in cash or blood.

**Campaign types:** Many types of cyberpunk campaigns are possible, including those with subcampaigns occurring within the main campaign. For example, the main campaign may center on the activities of a group of corporate characters, while a subcampaign might concern additional characters (say, netrunners—"super hackers"? involved in other pursuits. You could also have minicampaigns, a series of adventures each with definite endings. A minicampaign might deal with a corporate war between Orbital Air and American Spaceways, which ends when one company is absorbed by the other.

Some suggested themes might include:

**Police:** The majority of PCs are members of a police force, which may be either a poorly equipped local unit or a special-forces unit using the latest hardware, like the "Cyber-psycho" squads in the CYBERPUNK game. In the CYBERPUNK game, characters would be from the police

"class"; in 2300 AD, they would be from the law-enforcement branch. Adventures will involve police work: investigations, arrests, stakeouts, firefights, etc. For inspiration, see *Blade Runner* and *Robocop*.

**Corporate:** Most of the PCs are employees (in some capacity) of a corporation. Positions in cyberpunk-style corporations range from executives to assassination teams, so players can choose from a wide variety of character types. Adventures can include such things as involvement in corporate wars, industrial espionage, kidnapping members of other corporations ("extractions"), and stealing from other corporations ("lift out").

**Government agency:** The majority of the PCs work for a government agency, like the CIA, DEA, Mossad, KGB, NSA, etc. Adventures could include assassinations, theft, espionage, police actions, and other cloak-and-dagger stuff. These are good campaigns for people who like espionage and science fiction.

**Military:** Most of the PCs are members of a military unit (U.S. Marines, U.S. Trans-Orbital Navy, Soviet Ground Forces, corporate security, etc.). Adventures are combat oriented and involve battles, sabotage, cadre duty, and such. Playing a PC in a large military unit can be dull, so it is common for military campaigns to focus on small mercenary units or small, active parts of larger military organizations. With the Kafer war occurring in the 2300 AD game and the corporate wars raging in the CYBERPUNK game, this can be an excellent campaign type.

**Journalists:** Most of the PCs are reporters or cameramen, and the campaign centers around the acquisition and transmission of news. In cyberpunk worlds, getting the news can be very dangerous, so there is often a need for PCs who can shoot more than a picture. Adventurers can investigate corrupt officials, expose corporate crime, and bring the truth to light. Watch Max Headroom.

**Netrunning:** Most of the PCs are netrunners or cyberjockeys. These campaigns take place almost entirely in cyberspace; adventures involve runs into the net (computer network) to steal data, break defenses, and so forth. The disadvantages of a cyberspace campaign are that most people don't find it to their taste, and it tends to blur into other gaming types (usually fantasy), as the computerized "landscape" can be developed into virtually any form.

**Mixed:** A campaign can consist of elements from other types, such as mixing a police squad and a journalist team. These are good campaigns because they can accommodate many interests while still maintaining focus.

**Loose:** A campaign can also involve PCs of all types, in which there is no specific purpose or focus. While the players have a lot of freedom, the campaign lacks structure and this can make the preparation of adventures difficult. Further, without

focus, players may tend to drift apart and work on their own interests, failing to work together at all.

Naturally, these are but a few suggestions. I personally prefer focused campaigns, because the players have definite goals and it is easier to prepare for play. While a loose campaign can be fun and allows more variety, it has the negative consequences of being difficult to prepare and having a tendency to "blob out" and lose all purpose (campaign death soon follows). Always get player input before setting up the campaign. There are few things as depressing as having a campaign no one wants to play.

**Mechanics:** Game masters often tinker with the rules, but the results are often undesirable. While I cannot tell you how to modify your game, I do have the following suggestions: Think twice about making a change. Test out changes in "non-play" situations to see what effect they will have. Make small changes first and work up to bigger changes. Be wary of rule changes made during the heat of playing a game. Involve the players in the rule-changing procedure by listening to their suggestions and at the very least informing them before play begins. Remember that a poor rule change can have disastrous effects on a campaign.

**Nonplayer characters:** In the cyberpunk universe, normal citizens tend to be greedier, more violent, and nastier than those found in other genres. The "heroes" of many cyberpunk books are often addicted to drugs and make their livings stealing other people's property—and they're the nicest guys on the planet. However, you may wish to tone down the level of degeneration in your campaign, especially if you are running a 2300 AD campaign. This is up to you and your players.

Some nonplayer character (NPC) types in cyberpunk games include:

**Gangmen:** Members of gangs. They range from normal gang members who deal in minor violence and petty theft to the "bad boys" who are cyber-enhanced and rule the streets.

**Shadow techs:** These are the shadow scientists of the underworld who provide black market technology. They are usually willing to provide any service for a price.

**Movers:** People who sell illegal or quasi-legal goods.

**Rogue metal:** A cybernetically enhanced individual who has gone insane.

**Runners:** People who transport goods illegally.

**Guardman:** A good cop.

**Vig:** Short for vigilante, a person who hunts criminals.

**Causeman:** A person with a cause or mission (to save the whales; bring peace to the earth, or whatever).

There are countless other types of NPCs. To get an idea about how to play the cyberpunk-style NPCs, see the various films and read the books previously men-



tioned. While most of the characters in these books are degenerate representations of humanity, some stand out as good and decent. Be careful not to allow your campaign to decay into some sort of hell populated only by vermin. Not everyone is bad—just most people.

**Technology:** In the cyberpunk genre, technology rules. Technology is analogous to magic in fantasy role-playing games: It gets things done and is essential to the game, yet is subject to incredible abuses. The following are some suggestions on how to use (and not abuse technology) in your campaign.

First, decide on the technological level at which you wish to run your campaign. Most cyberpunk games have a pre-set level, and it is a good idea to start with that level. You should also limit the technology to what you and your players can grasp and to what seems sensible to you. For example, I can't get into "blaster eyes" and super bionics, so I don't include them in my campaign.

Second, understand the limits of technology in the fields of cybernetics, laser weaponry, spacecraft, and so forth. Technology is not magic and is governed by physical laws that limit what can be made. Further, both the CYBERPUNK and 2300 AD games strongly emphasize a realistic view of technology, and I believe this is a wise decision on the part of the designers. Super-powered items are out of place in cyberpunk. If you want super powers, then play a super-hero role-playing game. Keep in mind that every item used should have at least some basis in modern technology and should be explainable. For example, in CYBERPUNK game, the idea of interfacing a computer and sending your mind into the net seems magical. However, it is actually just a logical extension of the virtual environment systems in use today. In the 2300 AD game, the stutterwarp space drive is based on principles of quantum jumping from current physics.

Third, limit the PCs' access to technology. They should not be able to buy laser weapons and cybernetics at the local sports shop. High-tech items should be kept expensive and rare. Further, you will definitely want to limit the amount and kind of equipment the PCs own or have wired into their bodies. You can limit the player's cash resources or the availability of the equipment, you can impose legal restrictions on certain items, and, if all else fails, the PCs can have "accidents." The CYBERPUNK game has an excellent system for restricting cybernetic enhancement. Each item has a "humanity cost"; when you run out of humanity, your character becomes an NPC. Technology can also be limited by giving it effects detrimental to the PC. For example, an implant that cut off all pain might gradually deaden the character's nervous system, reducing his reflex or dexterity scores. Limit the technology in your campaign, or the game will quickly become boring if every PC is a

"robocop."

Fourth, be wary of new items. At some point, someone (you or a player) will want to introduce new equipment into the campaign. Strictly limit these new items to preserve play balance. The building of technological items requires skill, education, and special equipment. Advanced items like cybernetics cannot be put together in a character's basement with a soldering iron and a bunch of Radio Shack parts. The research, development, and production of advanced items involves years and lots of money, so leave the introduction of new items to corporations and governments. However, if the character happens to have a Ph.D. in some technical field and has a well-equipped lab, he could produce some new minor items.

Once a new item enters play, keep in mind a few other things. Technology can be duplicated (just ask the Soviets), and PCs should not be surprised if copies of "their" special item turn up. New items will possibly attract government and corporate attention, ranging from monetary offers for the design to attempts to steal it and cover up the evidence (i.e., kill the inventor). Make the development of new technology a slow and expensive procedure, and carefully regulate what you let in to your campaign.

Fifth, keep in mind the special problems associated with cybernetics. Consider the limits of technology: It can do only so much. Things can be made only so small and only so strong, and certain things are beyond the limit of even 2300 AD game technology. For example, a "laser-gun eye" is very implausible. You need a power source powerful enough to make the laser a real weapon, yet small enough to fit into the eye (and leave room for the visual equipment). Further, a laser generates a lot of waste heat; unless it was shielded, it would vent heat into the character's brain (which is usually fatal).

Also consider people's psychological limitations. It is one thing for the player to want his PC to be a walking tank. It is quite another thing for a human being to have his body *altered*. Most humans have a strange preference for their original body parts, even if metal is better than meat. As noted earlier, the CYBERPUNK game deals with this problem with a humanity cost. In other games you will have to develop your own system for controlling cyborg creation. Further, consider how other people will react to a cybernetically enhanced individual. Small alterations will have little effect, but having one's arms replaced with blades and automatic-weapon cyberarms will make the character feared by normal people and likely to run into problems with the police. Most humans feel machinery to be somewhat alien when implanted into human flesh and will react accordingly.

Keep in mind the limitations of the human body, too. While metal is very strong, it is usually anchored to flesh and bone

that is not as strong. A cyberarm may have the strength to stop a compact car from moving unless the character with the arm is very strong, but the PC will suffer a dislocated or broken shoulder if he attempts this feat. Even if cyberarms can lift half a ton and cyberlegs can run 50 MPH, the supporting muscle and bone cannot take such stress and will be damaged. You can prevent the players' PCs from abusing cybernetics by first warning them with muscle pulls, then moving up to dislocations and broken bones. Eventually they will take the hint. If the PC tries to avoid these limitations by having his entire body replaced with metal, be sure to enforce the psychological effect this will have on him and other people (in the CYBERPUNK game, this is called "body plating" and is one of the fastest ways to make your PC into an NPC by humanity loss). An important part of cyberpunk is the struggle between flesh and metal, between man and machine. If cybernetics simply become tools, the game will not reach its full potential.

**Atmosphere:** The atmosphere of a cyberpunk game is different from those of other games. There are basically two things to keep in mind, both previously mentioned: It's a dark future, and technology rules. It is important to convey the proper feeling of the campaign to the players.

**People:** While there are many normal people in the cyberpunk world (especially in 2300 AD campaigns, where the majority is normal), cyberpunk people tend to be of lesser moral fiber than we are accustomed to. The worst people are greedy, unlikable, self centered, and violent—and these are their virtues. However, there will be a middle strata of people who are not bad people—they are just cyberpunks. They are focused on technology, rapid change, and keeping ahead of the times. They live fast, party hard, and die young. There are, of course, heroes even among the cyberpunks. These are the people who are out to make sense of a world gone slightly mad and to battle oppression and injustice in their own ways.

**Places:** While there are still "normal," familiar places, cyberpunks generally live in urban jungles. Emphasize how confusing, dirty, crowded, and bizarre these cities are (see the vision of Los Angeles in *Blade Runner*). Further, make a strong contrast between the poor sections and the rich sections; an important part of cyberpunk is the concept of the fight for social justice. In the CYBERPUNK game, the Earth is a very bad place to be; in the 2300 AD game, it is a pretty good place with some bad areas. It is up to you just how big you want to make the bad areas. You can make cyberpunk a small subculture (as in 2300 AD games) or a full culture (as in the CYBERPUNK game).

A second major area for cyberpunk action is in space (see the *Near Orbit* supplement for the CYBERPUNK game). In



space adventures, emphasize the omnipresence of technology and the lonely emptiness of the universe.

*Things:* In the cyberpunk universe, things have almost as much status as people. Machinery should take on a personality of its own and begin to crowd in on humanity. Cybernetics, weapons, vehicles, and other equipment should be carefully described and presented in such a way as to convey to the players the rapid change, technophilia, and technophobia that are all part of cyberpunk. Part of the genre's theme is the constant "war" between man and machine, and the danger that "progress" will drown mankind's humanity under a sea of machines. Just be careful not to overdo it.

Your game-mastering descriptions are vital and are what build the world and make it live for the players. Other resources can help you. Illustrations and artwork are useful, whether drawn by you or a player or taken from a book or magazine. Background mood music can also be helpful, but do not let it interfere with the game by playing the music too loudly.

**Adventure ideas:** Good adventures make good campaigns, and some suggestions may help. First, develop an idea of what the adventure will be about (books and movies are good inspirations). Be sure to focus the adventure properly. If it is

focused too loosely, you will have to write a great deal and the players may get lost in the action and plot. If it is focused too narrowly, the players will feel like puppets in a play. A well-focused adventure has a definite goal but allows sufficient freedom to make play enjoyable. Balancing your adventures will take practice as there is no magic formula that will tell you how to do it. Some suggested ideas for cyberpunk adventures include:

*Hunt:* This involves hunting down and capturing or killing a particular person or group. The people hunted can range from escaped criminals to escaped military projects (as per *Blade Runner* or *Jake Thrash*). For example, the PCs might be hired to hunt down a cybernetically enhanced assassin before he can kill an important government official. Preparation would involve mapping city areas and generating game statistics for the assassin and other NPCs.

*Theft:* The PCs might have to steal a particular thing (from computer programs to people), usually from a guarded location. For example, the characters might be hired to take an experimental personality module from a corporate artificial intelligence core. The setup would include maps of the corporate building, statistics for the guards, and information on the module itself (read *Neuromancer*).

*Investigation:* Here, the PCs try to ac-

quire information for various purposes. The PCs might be reporters, police, agents, or whatever. For example, a group of journalists receives a leaked tip that a certain official is on the take to allow illegal weapons production in his district. The adventure would involve searching for evidence to support this.

*Escort/guard duty:* The characters are hired or assigned to guard a person, place, or thing. For example, the characters are hired by a politically motivated rockerboy (popular singer) to protect him from attacks. Mapping the areas where the rockerboy will be (e.g., concert halls and hotels) and generating the statistics for the assassins are your jobs here.

*Transport:* The characters are hired or ordered to bring an item or person from here to there, often illegally and through opposition (read *Damnation Alley* and *Hardwired*). For example, the PCs may be hired to take a package to an orbital habitat. Unknown to them, the package contains a biological agent prepared by a corporation to enable it to purchase the habitat cheaply (once the habitat's current inhabitants are dead). Preparation would involve mapping the habitat and generating the NPCs, as well as deciding what effects the bioweapon will have on the characters and if they are expendable in the corporation's eyes.

**Adventure writing:** Once you have an



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idea for an adventure, you can start writing it out. I follow a standard format when I write a cyberpunk adventure, then modify it to fit particular cases. This makes the organization and preparation easier, as I already know where to find everything. My format is set up as follows:

**Heading:** This contains the introductory data, including the type of adventure (transport, investigation, etc.), the location and time, and a very brief summary of the adventure, noting how many and what types of characters are best for play.

**Background:** This part has two main sections: the GM's briefing (the history relevant to the adventure, as well as information on the people, corporations, etc. involved); and the PCs' briefing (the background that the characters are aware of, either as previous knowledge or from an actual briefing).

**Events:** Each event in an adventure should lead to other events in a cause-and-effect relationship. For each event, describe its location (include maps) and time of occurrence, the NPCs involved (with extra information on why the event takes place, details on running combat or conversation, goals that should be achieved, and consequences of the PCs' actions).

**Random encounter tables:** These add an element of chance to an otherwise structured adventure. Note the location to which the chart applies, the probability of

encounters, the game statistics for encountered creatures, etc.

**Conclusion:** The wrapup of the adventure is where everything is resolved and explained. Possible tie-ins with other adventures, resulting from the PCs' actions, are also given here.

Once you have finished the adventure, you are ready to run it. Make sure you are as familiar as possible with the relevant game rules before starting, so you don't bog down at the wrong moment. To give your adventures the cyberpunk feel, you can do the following:


1. Make the adventure seem real and sharp. Describing the setting in detail. The NPCs should be like real people, talking and acting in a consistent manner.

2. Keep things moving. Cyberpunk is a rapidly paced genre. The PCs should always be in action, as if some force is pushing them along. This effect can be produced by introducing rapid changes in technology, loyalties, people's dress and behavior, and so forth. Though something should always be happening to the characters during play, it need not always be bad. This genre is the logical extension of our own busy, rush-hour world, and it should feel that way.

3. Make life rough for the PCs. Cyberpunk is a hardball genre. Paranoia, betrayal, threats, crime, murder, and so forth are all part of everyday life for the

cyberpunk. Keep the PCs on their toes, but balance this with fair play; no one wants to play in a killer campaign.

4. Keep the atmosphere appropriate (i.e., unpleasant). This is a genre of the dark future. As the CYBERPUNK game puts it: "... it always rains ... The stars never come out. The sun never shines. ... The last bird died in 2008 ... the sky is full of hydrocarbons and the oceans full of sludge." (*Welcome to Night City*, page 6). Don't take it too far if this might turn some people off. But if you and your players can take it, play it to the max.

5. Adopt the cyberpunk viewpoint. Don't just highlight the technology; point out how people talk differently and behave differently from what the players are used to in the 20th century. Make use of all the slang and jargon in the genre, and encourage the players to use it in the game. If a player says, "I turn on my computer and use the menu to look for the command, then enter cyberspace," he is not into the game. If he says, "I punch deck, scarf the food list, and jump into the void," he is into it. It is very important to have the proper perspective. After all, cyberpunk is a state of mind. 

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## A BATTLETECH\* guide to making your 'Mechs unique

While reading *Technical Readout 3025* and *Technical Readout 3026*, put out by the FASA Corporation for the BATTLETECH\* game, a glaring inconsistency caught my eye. Under the "Capabilities" section in the equipment descriptions were discussions on the superior and inferior systems each 'Mech and vehicle utilized. However, these descriptions had no real effect on the game. This was not only disappointing, but it also made cer-

tain 'Mechs and vehicles inferior to others because their complex systems had no effect on which was doing a better job. For instance, the Rifleman and JagerMech 'Mechs were both praised for their abilities as anti-aircraft platforms. But I would much rather have an Archer or Marauder 'Mech taking on aircraft, because in the actual game all four 'Mechs have the same chance of hitting the aircraft, and the Marauder and Archer would do much

more damage on a successful hit.

So, I have created a list of modifications for all the 'Mechs and vehicles for which I currently have the statistics and in-depth descriptions (all the 'Mechs and vehicles presented in the two books listed above). The modifiers given are listed for each die-roll target number, not the actual die roll. This system concurs with that presented in the *BATTLETECH Manual: The Rules of Warfare*.



## BattleMechs

### Light 'Mechs

*Commando*: None.

*Firestarter*: None.

*Javelin*: A piloting skill check at a -1 bonus is required when running through rough terrain, rubble, or woods.

*Jenner*: This 'Mech cannot punch because of its arm design.

*Locust*: This 'Mech cannot punch because of its arm design.

*Ostscout*: This 'Mech has highly sensitive sensor arrays that can detect heat, light, sound, etc., at a 90-km radius. While in deep scan, however, the 'Mech will not be able to warn its pilot of danger. Another scanning mode can also alert pilots to the location of 'Mechs, vehicles, large groups of men (10 or more within 10 meters of each other), mine fields, and cities.

*Panther*: This 'Mech must roll 2d6 upon any successful punches with the right arm. If a 12 is rolled, the heat output of the PPC increases by one point.

*Spider*: All attacks on a jumping Spider are penalized with an additional +1 penalty to their to-hit numbers.

*Stinger*: None.

*UrbanMech*: This 'Mech cannot punch, but attackers get an additional +1 penalty on their to-hit numbers in any situation in which the UrbanMech has partial cover.

*Valkyrie*: None.

*Wasp*: None.

### Medium 'Mechs

*Assassin*: The game master should roll 2d6 every time the Assassin falls or is hit in its left torso. If a 12 is rolled, the SRM 2 ammo jams and will no longer feed into the SRM, although the round currently loaded may still fire. This jam can only be repaired in a fully functional 'Mech repair bay.

*Blackjack*: None.

*Centurion*: None.

*Cicada*: None.

*Clint*: All repair times are multiplied by 1d4.

*Dervish*: None.

*Enforcer*: None.

*Griffin*: None.

*Hatchetman*: The Hatchetman's hatchet does 9 points of damage, instead of the standard 5 points of damage done by a normal punch from a 45-ton 'Mech. The 'Mech ejection system removes the entire head of the 'Mech, not just the pilot. This 'Mech also has a -1 bonus on its to-hit number against aircraft.

*Hermes II*: This 'Mech's advanced communications system has a 1000-km range and can communicate with spacecraft in orbit.

*Hunchback*: None.

*Phoenix Hawk*: This 'Mech has many optional devices available to it. The GM should decide which of these devices

he will allow the players to have, as well as their effects and cost. See the "Capabilities" section of the Phoenix Hawk in FASA's *Technical Readout*: 3025.

*Scorpion*: This 'Mech may change its facing at the cost of .5 MPs per hex side turned. All "leftover" fractions are rounded up. For example, a two-hexside facing change costs 1 MP and a three- or four-hexside facing change costs 2 MPs. These facing changes can be made at any time during the Scorpion's turn in the Movement Phase. Any attack against this 'Mech made by infantry in the same hex as the Scorpion automatically gets a chance for a critical hit in each of the following areas: the left torso, center torso, right torso, and head.

*Shadow Hawk*: None.

*Trebuchet*: None.

*Vindicator*: None.

*Vulcan*: All attacks on this 'Mech are at a +2 penalty to hit at long range and +1 penalty at medium range because of the Vulcan's shape. The Vulcan also has a mandatory heat gain of two, instead of three, when jumping.

*Whitworth*: None.

*Wolverine*: None.

### Heavy 'Mechs

*Archer*: None.

*Catapult*: This 'Mech cannot punch because of its arm design.

*Crusader*: None.

*Dragon*: This 'Mech receives a -1 bonus to its piloting skill number when rolling to prevent falling from massive damage and when falling from physical attacks (inflicted or received). Attackers also gain a +1 penalty to hit when firing at the Dragon from long range.

*Grasshopper*: None.

*JagerMech*: The JagerMech has a -2 bonus on its to-hit number against aircraft because of its tracking system.

*Marauder*: This 'Mech has one critical weakness: the collar that connects the pod-shaped torso to the 'Mech's legs. On any hit on the center torso on the Back or Side Hit Table, the attacker should roll 2d6. If a 12 is rolled, the Marauder either loses its ability to swivel its torso, or its ammo train to the autocannon is jammed (roll 1d6: 1-3 torso cannot swivel, 4-6 ammo is jammed). If two successful hits are made on the torso swivel, the 'Mech's movement is reduced by half. If three such hits occur, the 'Mech loses all movement. If multiple ammo-train hits occur, 1-6 ammo shells explode. Marauder pilots may wish to add an improvised armor collar around the linkage. To do this, the Tech may add up to 10 points of armor that strictly protects the linkage. If this is done, the armor must be breached before critical hits on the linkage only may be made. The pilot of the 'Mech also gains a +1

on his piloting skill number per 5 points of armor (rounded up) because of the weight imbalance created by the collar. Attackers may aim at the collar as per the normal aimed-shot rules, at an additional +1 penalty on their to-hit numbers.

*Orion*: The Orion's efficient design makes it very easy to repair, so divide the repair time by 1d4. The Orion's missile systems also have a -1 bonus on their to-hit numbers against aircraft. Unfortunately, the 'Mech's LRMs might shut down because of their inferior cooling system. When rolling for shutdown due to heat, roll separately for the LRM system.

*Ostroc*: This 'Mech has a +1 penalty on its to-hit number when punching, and all attackers gain an additional +1 penalty on their to-hit numbers when the Ostroc is in partial cover.

*Ostrol*: This 'Mech has 5km scanning and targeting equipment.

*Quickdraw*: This 'Mech may fire all its medium lasers rearward. The Quickdraw loses 1 MP for each 8 points of damage done to its legs.

*Rifleman*: The Rifleman has a -2 bonus on its to-hit number against aircraft because of its tracking system.

*Thunderbolt*: None.

*Warhammer*: None.

### Assault 'Mechs

*Atlas*: This 'Mech can communicate with ships in space.

*Awesome*: None.

*Banshee*: None.

*Battlemaster*: None.

*Charger*: None.

*Cyclops*: The Cyclops' communications systems allow for a planet-wide sending radius as well as surface-to-space communications.

*Goliath*: This 'Mech cannot move if one of its legs is disabled.

*Stalker*: This 'Mech cannot punch because of its arm design.

*Victor*: None.

*Zeus*: The Zeus' LRM system has a cumulative 30% chance of failing each month it goes without maintenance. This 'Mech's right arm punch does 10 points of damage.

## Aerospace Fighters

### Light Fighters

*Cheetah*: This fighter has a +1 on its piloting skill number (PSN) for atmospheric maneuvers.

*Seydilitz*: None.

*Sholagar*: This fighter has a +1 penalty on its PSN for atmospheric maneuvers.

*Sparrow Hawk*: Any wing damage on the Sparrow Hawk results in a +1 penalty on its to-hit number per 5 points of damage.



*Thrush*: This fighter has a +1 penalty on its PSN for atmospheric maneuvers.

### Medium Fighters

*Corsair*: This fighter has a -1 bonus on its PSN for atmospheric maneuvers.

*Lucifer*: None.

*Shilone*: None.

*Stingray*: None.

*Transit*: This fighter has a -1 bonus on its PSN for atmospheric maneuvers.

### Heavy Fighters

*Chippewa*: This fighter has a +1 penalty on its PSN for atmospheric maneuvers.

*Riever*: The Riever is very easy to repair, so divide the repair time by 1d4.

*Slayer*: None.

*Stuka*: None.

*Transgressor*: This fighter has a +1 penalty on its PSN for atmospheric maneuvers.

Note: There was no information available for the Centurion, Eagle, Hellcat, Lightning, Sabre, and Thunderbird.

### Vehicles

#### Light Vehicles

*Armored Personnel Carriers*: None.

*Boomerang Plane*: None.

*Condor*: None.

*Coolant Truck*: This truck can cool up to five 'Mechs.

*Drillson*: The Drillson can fire its weapon systems in darkness or without line of sight with no penalties, and has no need for a forward observer.

*Engineering Vehicle*: None.

*Ferret VTOL*: The Ferret carries 15 remote sensors.

*Galleon*: The Galleon's medium laser generates six heat per round.

*Goblin*: None.

*Guardian Fighter*: This fighter needs only 50 meters to take off and land. Its design is also very efficient, so repair times should be divided by 1d4 and support costs are reduced by half.

*Harasser Missile Platform*: None.

*Hetzer*: There is a 35% chance that any Hetzer is inoperable when purchased.

*Hunter Support Tank*: None.

*J-27 Ordinance Transport*: This transport carries three tons of ammo.

*J. Edgar*: Because of the amount of old equipment in these vehicles, repair times are multiplied by 1d4 and monthly maintenance costs are doubled for this tank.

*Karnov UR Transport*: This air transport has VTOL capability.

*M.A.S.H. Units*: The M.A.S.H. trucks can support 100 men.

*Maxim Transport*: None.

*'MechBuster Fighter*: This fighter has a -1 bonus on its to-hit number when it's dive bombing.

*Mobile HQ*: The Headquarters can communicate with any friendly unit in the local solar system.

*Packrat*: This vehicle carries 10 men, who can live without support for two months. It can also jam all communications within a 10-km range and transmit in a 1000-km radius.

*Pegasus Scout Tank*: The Pegasus has a 30-km scanning range.

*Planetlifter Air Transport*: The Planetlifter can carry up to 70 tons of equipment, including vehicles, 'Mechs, or even another Planetlifter (some 'Mechs and vehicles may need to be broken down first). It also has VTOL capabilities and does not need an established airfield in order to land.

*Saladin Assault Tank*: None.

*Saracen*: None.

*Savannah Master*: None.

*Scimitar*: None.

*Scorpion*: None.

*Sea Skimmer Hydrofoil*: None.

*Skulker Scout Tank*: This vehicle has a 500-km radio range. It can also deploy 15 remote sensors and monitor them from inside the tank at a range of 7 km.

*Striker*: None.

*Swift Wind*: This scout car can enter rough and rubble hexes at one-quarter speed. It has a 1000-km communication range and can communicate with space vessels, including JumpShips. It can also tap into enemy communication systems.

*Vedette*: None.

*Warrior Attack VTOL*: This vehicle has a -1 bonus on its to-hit number against any target because of its advanced target acquisition system. It can also carry 250 kg of remote sensors and monitor them from a range of 10 km.

### Heavy Vehicles

*Behemoth*: None.

*Bulldog*: None.

*Demolisher*: None.

*Hi-Scout Drone Carrier*: The Hi-Scout's scanners have a detection range of 60 km. The scanners are similar in performance to that of an Ostscout.

*LRM/SRM Carrier*: None.

*Manticore*: None.

*Mobile Long Tom*: This artillery unit can travel only on roads.

*Monitor Naval Vessel*: None.

*Napfind/Pathtrack*: These drones have scanning systems that tie into the Hi-Scout. The two systems are virtually the same. When the drones are away from the Hi-Scout for extended periods of time or are out of the carrier's sensor range, the drones can record gathered information. The Pathtrack's sensor range is 20 km, while the Napfind's is 10 km.

*Neptune Submarine*: None.

*Ontos*: None.

*Partisan*: The Partisan has a -2 bonus on all to-hit numbers against aircraft. The targeting computer can also be used from a remote position, allowing the gunner to retreat to an improved position and avoid being killed if the Partisan is destroyed. This allows the tank to function even if the crew is killed, because the gunner is not in the actual vehicle.

*Patton*: This vehicle's AC/10 cannot aim higher than a 'Mech's legs at a range of three hexes or less.

*Pike Support Vehicle*: All three AC/2s on the Pike fire with the same targeting track, causing all three to hit or miss in one volley.

*Rommel*: This vehicle's AC/20 cannot aim higher than a 'Mech's legs at a range of three hexes or less.

*Shreck PPC Carrier*: None.

*Sturmfeur*: This barrage vehicle does not need forward observers to use indirect fire from its LRMs.

*Von Luckner*: Every five rounds, roll 2d6. If a 12 is rolled, one of the tank's weapon systems jams. Also, the tank's SRM 6 systems fire to the right and left of the AC/20 and thus cannot fire at the same targets.

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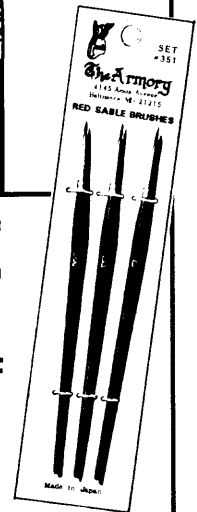
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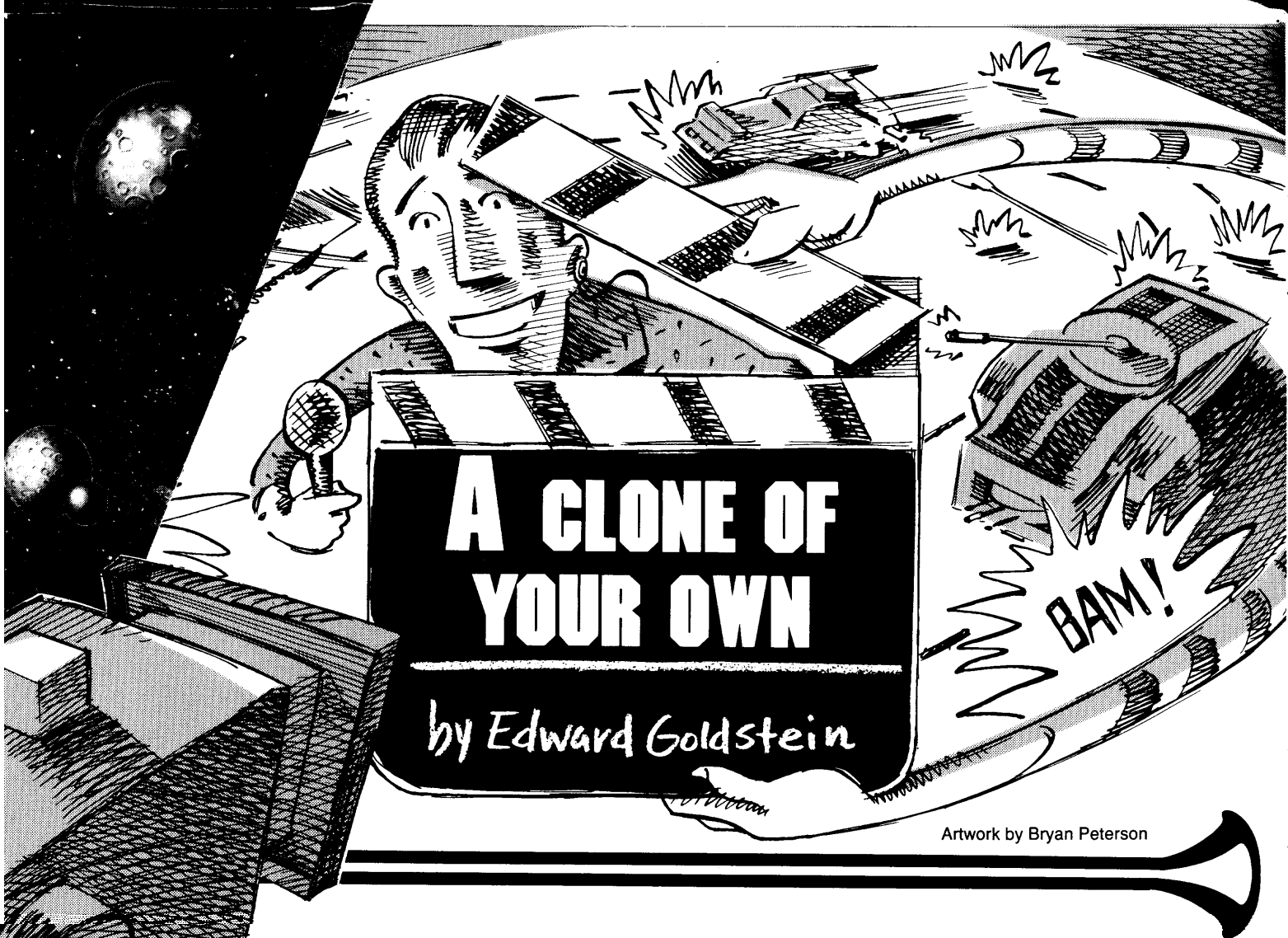
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## Life after death—of a sort— in SJG's GURPS\* AUTODUEL\* game

*OPENING SHOT: Camera zooms out slowly from the scene of an autoduel arena. The roar of the autoduelling cars fills the background sound track as the commentator speaks in voice-over. Camera continues to zoom out slowly, revealing Alex Henderson standing in front of a large projection screen on which the autoduel can be seen. Alex can be seen in medium close-up, with microphone in hand.*

ALEX HENDERSON: "Cloning is believed to be a common practice among many autoduellists and the rich. In reality, autoduellists make up only 12% of all cloning in the U.S. and Free Oil States. In fact, 23% of all cloning is purchased by prominent businessmen and the rich, 64% by politicians, and the other 1% by various professionals. What happens when a duellist is cloned? How do you bring the dead back to life? My name is Alex Henderson, and I'm your host for 'Eye on Autoduelling.' "

*Zoom in to footage of an autoduelling accident projected on the screen.*

ALEX (voice-over): "On April 23, 2037, George Douglas was killed in a duel at San Diego Municipal Duelling Arena. The medics arrived on the scene immediately after the duel had ended. They pried the right door off the car. As soon as they got to George, they examined him, and the senior medic pronounced him dead at the scene. They pulled him from the car, stripped him of his body armor, and put him on a gurney."

*Cut to Alex on camera, holding an earphone to his ear.*

ALEX (on camera): "As the ambulance left the scene for the Gold Cross office, I spoke by phone with the senior medical officer on duty at the office, Dr. John H. Williamson."

*Cut to shot of Dr. Williamson walking down a medical center hallway. Camera follows Williamson and stops as he stops before a window in the hallway. Camera trucks in for a close-up profile of Williamson looking through the window. Cut to operating*



*room shot from overhead angle (point-of-view shot from Williamson's angle).*

ALEX (voice-over): "Dr. Williamson, when a duellist is killed and he has a clone, what is the first thing you do?"

DR. WILLIAMSON (voice-over): "Well, first we check to see if the deceased made a provision to do a memory transfer. If he did, then we take his remains to a prep room,"

ALEX (voice-over): "I see. But do you have the facilities here to do the transfer?"

DR. WILLIAMSON (voice-over): "No. But we can do the stabilization and prep."

*Cut to over-the-shoulder shot of Williamson standing in front of the window. A body can be seen on a table behind the window. Attendants work on the body.*

DR. WILLIAMSON (voice-over): "We clean up the driver's wounds, then give special injections to help keep the protein in the brain cells from deteriorating."

*Cut to medium shot of operation being discussed.*

DR. WILLIAMSON (voice-over): "After we strip the body of all remaining clothes, it's wrapped in a sterile bandage."

ALEX (voice-over): "Much like a mummy."

DR. WILLIAMSON (voice-over): "Well, yes, a decidedly modern mummy."

*The activity with the body continues to be projected onto the screen.*

ALEX (voice-over): "George is now being wheeled into the memory transference room. There's an empty table in the room, and next to it, a body laying on another table with a white sheet covering it to the lower part of the chest. That's George Douglas's clone. The taped wires attached to the clone measure its vital signs. An oxygen mask has been placed over its face, and an I.V. has been placed in the left arm. The helmet with wires coming out is attached to the large computer bank. Now the doctors are placing George on the table next to his clone. First, they'll take him out of the gray plastic bag, unwrap the body bandages, and shave his head. Second, they'll connect him to the memory transference helmet and a few other probes. Looks like he's just about ready for the memory transfer. The computer's been activated. See the bioscanners? They'll monitor the progress of the clone. Once the memory transference begins, the entire process takes about four hours to complete."

*Cut to shot of clock. Dissolve to black and come up on clock four hours later. Cut to Alex on camera.*

ALEX: "After three hours and forty-seven minutes, the memory transfer is com-



plete, and it's time to wake the clone. The doctors use a small electric current, almost unmeasurable, to activate the brain."

*Cut to clone: arm tremors, general body movements, restrained by straps.*

ALEX (voice-over): "This small jolt of electricity jars the clone from the comatose state and the body stirs. It's like what jump-starting a dead car battery in the 20th century must have been like. And George Douglas lives again!"

*Cut to Alex on camera with another man.*

ALEX: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have with me one of California's—or, rather, the worlds—top duellists, Rick Valencia. Rick, welcome to 'Eye on Autoduelling.' Tell me, what's it like to wake up after a memory transfer?"

RICK: "Woody, like being drunk. I couldn't remember anything at first. I felt like I was dreaming. Then I remembered the

duel. In a split second, I opened my eyes and tried to scream. But something stopped the scream—my mouth was covered. It was terrible being strapped down, with fuzzy images and slurred voices all around me. It seemed to go on forever. Finally, I passed out. When I woke up again, I was in a hospital room with doctors and my family at my bedside. It was like heaven."

ALEX: "What an experience. Thanks for sharing it with us."

*Cut to a close-up of Rick, smiling.*

RICK: "Thanks. And let me remind you all that I'll be at San Diego Municipal Duelling arena, noon 'till four on Saturday."

*Cut to Alex alone.*

ALEX: "After a person is cloned, the clone goes through a three- to six-month, period of psychiatric treatment. After all, going from death to life can be very traumatic. Treatment is usually sched-

uled for twice a week. The strong recover quickly. For others, recovery and self-acceptance may take years:

*Zoom out to show Alex and another man.*

ALEX: "We now have Dr. Willard Greenstein, from the Gold Cross Psychiatric office. Welcome, Dr. Greenstein. Tell me, Doctor, how long have you been a psychiatrist at Gold Cross?"

DR. GREENSTEIN: "Two and a half years."

ALEX: "In that time, you must have seen a good number of people who have been cloned and have undergone psychiatric evaluation and treatment. What is the main reason for this evaluation and treatment?"

DR. GREENSTEIN: "Well, Alex, a lot of the patients undergo an identity crisis. Are they really themselves? Is there something missing? The ones with strong religious beliefs go into deep soul searching about what happened to them. There are countless ways in which this identity crisis manifests itself, but it all boils down to the shock of having died a violent death and come back to life in a new body. To cushion this blow, we try to prevent our patients from witnessing their own deaths on videotape or television. That can cause severe mental trauma—the kind that can take years to correct. Even with the best treatment, some never recover."

ALEX: "What about those duellists who have been cloned two or three times?"

DR. GREENSTEIN: "Well, they're an odd lot. Most of them actually need less psychiatric care than our other patients. Apparently, they get so used to dying that it doesn't effect them anymore. The worst thing they usually

suffer is some paranoia. In extreme cases, a multiply cloned individual may lose all sense of the value of life or suffer from extreme paranoia or phobias. This individual would require at least outpatient psychiatric care. Luckily, we've had some success in treating these disorders, though outpatient care may last for years."

ALEX: "Thank you, Dr. Greenstein."

*Cut to Alex only*

ALEX: "A recent scientific development in the last three years has expanded the field of cryogenics to include cloning. Robert Kendall is the Director of Cryogenics at the UCSD Medical Center."

*Zoom out to show Alex and another man.*

ALEX: "Dr. Kendall, what is your responsibility at UCSD?"

DR. KENDALL: "My job is to oversee operations of the Cryogenics Unit and to make sure everything runs smoothly, and to develop new methods for preserving our clients. Cryogenics involves lowering the body to a freezing temperature without damaging the subject. It's really the science of storing people."

ALEX: "What do you mean by storing?"

DR. KENDALL: "There are several ways in which we can do this. . ."

*As Dr. Kendall talks, we can see action projected on the screen behind the two men. The camera zooms in slowly, until only the action on the screen is in frame. We see medical technicians working with a carefully wrapped body at a cryogenics storage area.*

DR. KENDALL (voice-over): "We can store

someone while his clone is being grown instead of using the Mechanical Memory Storage Device transfer method. This is possible if Byzonine has been administered immediately after death. Another possibility is to transfer the client's memory to a clone and have the real body put into storage for later use. If the clone dies, the memory could be transferred to the original body again. Finally, the body could be stored and revived at a later date—but, as every one knows, that would be illegal if the clone itself is still active."

*Cut to close-up of Alex.*

ALEX: "Exactly what is Byzonine?"

*Cut to close-up of Kendall.*

DR. KENDALL: "Byzonine is a special compound that, when injected into a body through an artery in the neck within two hours after the patient's death, reacts with the protein in the brain cells to form a protective coating. The body's heart is artificial stimulated to get the Byzonine to the brain, where the compound slows the process of protein breakdown and lengthens storage time at a cryogenics facility for memory retrieval. It has been a great boon to the cloning industry."

*Cut to shot of both men.*

ALEX: "That was very interesting, Dr.

Kendall. Unfortunately, we are out of time. Thank you very much for talking with us, and to all of our other guests this evening, thanks. To George Douglas, continued good luck with your recovery, and we look forward to seeing you on the duelling circuit in a few months. I'm Alex Henderson, saying goodnight."

*Credits roll as Alex and Dr. Kendall talk; then fade to black.*

## Gaming notes

### Psychiatric problems

After a person has undergone a cloning operation, he must undergo a complete psychiatric evaluation; this will take 4d6 weeks at a cost of \$125 per week. If a person has been cloned before, subtract one week of psychiatric care for each cloning. If the person skips psychiatric treatment, he has a 25% chance (roll 1-3 on 1d12) per week for 4d6 weeks of experiencing some type of psychiatric side effect. This will happen at each episode of high stress, at the first opportunity. The effects are determined by rolling 1d12 on Table 1. The results follow.

*Extreme paranoia:* The player believes that everyone is after him. He takes extreme measures to keep at bay people he





believes might harm him. People regarded with suspicion include other duellists, police, armed ambulances, and any other armed vehicle or person. This person is so jittery that he may shoot first, then run at the first opportunity. This period of paranoia lasts for 6d6 hours. But, during any subsequent stressful events, his chance of having a psychiatric side effect goes up to 1-5 on 1d12.

**Paranoia:** This effect is similar to extreme paranoia, but police officers and other law-enforcement officials are regarded as saviors. This person will always follow police officers around for protection. These effects last for 4d6 hours. No changes are made to any rolls for subsequent psychiatric side effects.

**Self doubt:** The individual thinks 'that he is worthless, and believes he isn't himself. He thus goes out of his way to prove that he is himself, even if it means risking his life. This effect lasts for 1d6 days.

**Trauma:** The individual enters a severe state of shock. He lapses into a state of unconsciousness in five seconds, and wakes up 1d4 hours later. He must be taken to a hospital or receive some medical care within four hours of regaining consciousness, or he slips back into shock and dies.

**Multiple personality:** The person has a chance to undergo a personality change on a roll of 1 on 1d6; the roll is made every two hours or during any stressful situation. The referee determines the number of personalities and their natures. The condition is permanent unless psychiatric treatment is undertaken at a cost of \$500 a month for the next 3d6 months.

**Berserk:** The individual becomes psychotic and does irrational things, attacking people or cars at random. He may appear rational one moment, then become a maniac the next. The referee decides what actions the character takes. Every stressful situation will induce this erratic behavior, which will last for 1d6 hours. This period of insanity lasts for 2d6 + 6 months. If hospitalized and released after the insanity has passed, the patient must undergo a six-month period of follow-ups at a cost of \$200 per month, which will be partly state funded (50% of costs).

Duellists may undergo psychiatric treatment while their new bodies are growing stronger. This choice will shorten the overall stay at a hospital (see SJG's *Auto-duel Quarterly*, issue 4/4).

## Cryogenics

Instead of storing one's memory on an MMSD and having it transferred to a clone after it has been grown, many people are turning to cryogenics. Cryogenics is cheaper overall than MMSD use. The body, which must be injected with Byzonine before being brought to the hospital or Gold Cross Center, is prepared for cryogenic storage until a clone can be grown. The cryogenic chamber is kept cold with liquid nitrogen. When the clone

is ready, the body is removed and "defrosted." Then the brain memory preserved by Byzonine is transferred to the clone.

Because Byzonine is pumped into the brain after injection by artificially stimulating the deceased person's heart, it cannot be used if the body has taken severe damage to the head, heart, or upper torso. If the body is not cryogenically frozen, memory retention lengthens to 36 hours; if the body is frozen within 30 hours after death, memory retention extends to three weeks.

Optionally, a live, healthy person can transfer his memories to a clone, have his real body frozen, then have his clone be activated. This gives him the advantage of a body that's only 20 to 25 years of age. Meanwhile, the original body remains in storage to be used later if the clone dies. Awakening a body while its clone is active is illegal, as this invites incredible legal problems for everyone.

Basic cryogenic costs are given in Table 2. Table 3 gives SJG's CAR WARS\* game statistics for Gold Cross equipment, which is further detailed as follows:

**Portable main unit:** The main unit can hold three units of liquid nitrogen. Each unit of liquid nitrogen provides the freezing needs of one portable individual unit for six hours. Liquid nitrogen can be so stored for up to 36 hours before it begins to return to a gaseous state, which it will do at the rate of one-quarter unit per half hour for each unit. The portable cryogenic equipment is meant for the transporting of people stored cryogenically to a Gold Cross facility.

**Portable individual unit:** This is a cryogenic container that can hold one person in cryogenic storage. Several such units may be carried aboard a vehicle, but each must be connected to the vehicle's portable main unit and portable power unit.

**Portable CE power unit:** This device provides the power needs for cryogenic equipment. The amount of current and voltage that the cryogenic equipment requires cannot be provided by a standard vehicular power plant.

**MMSD prep area:** This allows a live person to transfer his memories to an MMSD even though he is not at a hospital. This will take six hours initially, and one hour for an update. An MMSD must be present with the prep area.

**Freezer:** This holds a person in cold storage (though he is *not* cryogenically frozen) until he can get to a Gold Cross Center. It is also used to transfer cryogenically frozen patients from one facility to another, if the transfer will take six hours or less.

In order for a person to use cryogenic equipment, he must have at least Medic-3 and be trained in the use of cryogenics, which takes four months and costs \$8,000 (there is no cost to Gold Cross employees, who might receive the training as part of their regular jobs).

## Gold Cross vehicles

The following are the CAR WARS game statistics for Gold Cross vehicles that utilize the information in this article. Personnel required by each vehicle are described as well.

**Gold Cross Bus:** 40' bus, x-hvy. chassis, regular truck power plant, 10 solid tires, driver, gunner, 2 medics, two VMGs with HD ammo in universal turrets (an EM for each with HD ammo), gas steamer with smoke (2 EM of smoke) back, 2 hi-res. computers, radar, imp. fire ext., 10 pts. LRFP component armor for PP, port. main unit, 2 individual units, port. CE power unit, aid station with 3 stretchers, 10 units of Byzonine, 2 first-aid kits (in cargo area), 1 medkit (in cargo area), toolkit (in cargo area). Cargo capacity: 1,070 lbs., 7 spaces. FP Armor: F40, UF15, UB15, B40, 35 in all other positions, 6 10-pt. FP WGs. 24,150 lbs., \$273,330.

Driver—Driver-2, Gunner-1, Mechanic-1, Hand Gunner-1, Medic-0. IBA, SMG, 1CG.

Gunner—Driver-0, Gunner-2, Mechanic-1, Hand Gunner-1, Medic-0. IBA, HP, 2G, 1CG.

Medic 1—Driver-0, Gunner-0, Mechanic-1, Hand Gunner-0, Medic-3, Running-2. BA, HP, 1G, GM.

Medic 2—Driver-0, Gunner-0, Mechanic-2, Hand Gunner-0, Medic-3, Running-2, Martial



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**Table 1**  
**Side Effects of Cloning**

1d12	Effect
1-2	Extreme paranoia
3-4	Paranoia
5-7	Self doubt
8-9	Trauma
10-11	Split personality
12	Berserk

**Table 2**  
**Cryogenic costs**

Preparing a body for storage: \$4,000  
 Storing a body/month: \$2,500  
 Taking body out of storage: \$500  
 Awakening ("defrosting") a body: \$3,500  
 Administering a dose of Byzonine: \$1,000  
 Transporting a body in a cryogenic state: \$5,000+ and ammo used.  
 Transporting a frozen body: \$3,000+ and ammo used.

**Table 3**  
**Portable Gold Cross Equipment**

Item	Cost	Weight (lbs.)	Space	Damage points	Power factors
Portable main unit	\$100,000	2,500	8	20	20
Portable individual unit	\$20,000	850	3	8	15
Unit of liquid nitrogen	\$100	25	0	0	n/a
Portable CE power unit	\$5,000	400	2	4	200*
MMSD prep area	\$4,000	250	4	5	n/a
Freezer	\$2,000	200	3	10	5**
Byzonine	\$1,000/dose	—	—	—	n/a

\* Amount of power factors it provides.

\*\* Able to draw power from the vehicle's power plant.

Arts-2, BA, HP with AV ammo, 2G, GM.

*Gold Cross Van:* Van, x-hvy. chassis, super power plant, hvy. suspension, 6 PR radials, driver, gunner, gauss gun in a universal turret, EM for gauss gun, imp. fire ext., hi-res. computer (in gunner position), radar, 2 med kits (in cargo area), aid station with 2 stretchers, toolkit, 10 units of Byzonine. Cargo capacity: 310 lbs., 7 spaces. FP Armor: F30, R20, L20, B25, T25, U10, 4 10-pt. FP WHs. Acceleration 5, HC 3. 6855 lbs., \$57,650.

Driver—Driver-2, Gunner-0, Medic-2, Hand Gunner-1, Running-1, Mechanic-0. BA, GM, HP, G.

Gunner—Driver-0, Gunner-1, Medic-3, Hand Gunner-1, Running-1, Mechanic-0.

*Gold Cross Pickup:* Pickup, x-hvy. chassis, T-cat pp, hvy. suspension, 6 PR radials, driver, VMG front, hi-res. computer, imp.

fire ext., toolkit (not included in weight, carried in pickup's bed). Cargo capacity: 13 spaces, 52 lbs. FP Armor: T16, U12, all other positions 45, 4 10-pt. WHs. Acceleration 5, HC 3. 7748 lbs., \$37,052.

Driver—Driver-3, Gunner-2, Mechanic-1, Medic-0. IBA, rifle with AV ammo, 2 CG.

*Gold Cross Van Trailer:* 25' van trailer, x-hvy. chassis, 8 solid tires, 3 medics (two gunning positions), gas streamer with smoke (back), 1 EM for GS, variable fire rocket pod (back) ammo is laser guided and armor piercing, EM for VFRP (ammo is the same), x-hvy hitch, aid station with 3 stretchers, MMSD (cost not included in the vehicle price), MMSD prep area, hi-res. computer, 3 freezer storage containers, 10 doses of Byzonine, imp. fire ext., small car PP, infrared targ. laser, LGL, radar. FP Armor: F20, RF35, LF35, RB35, TF10,

TB10, UF10, UB10, B37,4 10-pt. FP WHs. 12,009 lbs., \$75,180.

Medic 1—Gunner-2, Mechanic-0, Medic-3, Running-3, BA, GM, SMG.

Medic 2—Gunner-0, Medic-3, Running-3, Martial Arts-1, BA, GM, HP, bowie knife. Medic 3—Gunner-0, Drivery-0, Medic-4, Running-3, BA, GM, rifle with AV ammo.

*Gold Cross Life Flight Helicopter:* Transport helicopter, super copter power plant, pilot, gunner, 2 medics, 2 linked VMGs with HD ammo in a universal turret, 1 hi-res. computer, coaxial counter rotating system, 2 pairs of airfoils, 4 foil ejection system linked in pairs, radar detector, imp. fire ext., infrared sighting system, radar, LDR, aid station with 3 stretchers, 10 doses of Byzonine. Cargo capacity: 727 lbs., 1 space. Armor: T50, U120, 80 in all other positions. Acceleration: 5, HC: 2. 19,273 lbs., \$218,375. (Toolkit usually in cargo area.)

Pilot—Pilot-3, Gunner-1, Medic-0, Hand Gunner-0, Mechanic-1, Driver-0; IBA, SMG, G.

Gunner—Pilot-0, Gunner-2, Medic-2, Hand Gunner-1, Mechanic-2; IBA, rifle with AV ammo.

Medic 1—Pilot-0, Gunner-0, Medic-4, Hand Gunner-1, Driver-0, Running-3; BA, GM, HP, CG.

Medic 2—Pilot-0, Gunner-0, Medic-3, Hand Gunner-0, Driver-0, Running-3; BA, G M , S M G .

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# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines must be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

**WARNING:** We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the last Monday of October. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

- ❖ indicates an Australian convention.
- ✳ indicates a Canadian convention.
- indicates a European convention.

\* indicates a product produced by a company other than TSR, Inc. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies publishing those products. The use of the name of any product without mention of its trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status.

## PSURREALCON '91, February 8-10

The Norman Oklahoma Science-Fiction Assoc. (NOSFA) presents its third-annual convention at the Sheraton Hotel in Norman, Okla. This year's guests include Mercedes Lackey, Algis Budrys, Mark Rogers, David Lee Anderson, Keith Berdak, and Donna MacKenzie. Activities include a dealers' room, an art show, an auction, panels, two video rooms, gaming, and filksinging. Registration: \$12 until Feb. 7, or \$15 at the door. Single-day rates are available. For hotel reservations, call: (405) 364-2882. Send an SASE to: PSURREALCON, Oklahoma Memorial Union Rm. 215A, Norman OK 73019.

## CYBERCON '91, February 9

The CSU Science Fiction and Fantasy Club presents its second annual gaming convention at the Lory Student Center on the Colorado State University campus in Ft. Collins, Colo. Events include AD&D® SPELLJAMMER™, CYBERPUNK®, GURPS®, ROLEMASTER®, and B-17\* games, movie rooms, an art show, a silent auction, a costume contest, and a CYBER-photography contest. Registration: \$2.00. Write to: CYBERCON '91, Box 412 LSC, Ft. Collins CO 80523; or call: (303) 493-3652.

## CONNECT-A-CON, February 15-17

This SF/fantasy/gaming convention will be held at the Sheraton Westgate in Toledo, Ohio. Guests of honor include Jean Lorrach, Dennis McKiernan, and Rob Prior. Events include gaming, a writers' workshop, a short-story contest, a costume contest and masquerade ball, a murder-mystery contest, a huge dealers' room, a 24-hour movie room, an art show and auction, and a gaming auction. Registration: \$20/weekend. Write to: CONNECT-A-CON, P.O. Box 4674, Toledo OH 43620.

## DUN DRA CON XV, February 15-18

This convention will be held at the Oakland Airport Hyatt in Oakland, Calif. (Mention the con for special room rates.) Events include over 120 role-playing games, plus seminars, board games, tournaments, miniatures, SCA demos, a flea market, a figure-painting contest, a huge dealers' room, and plenty of open-gaming space. Registration: \$25 until Feb. 1; \$30/weekend or \$15/day at the door. Write to: DUN DRA CON, 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland CA 94618.

## ECONOMYCON IV, February 15-17

This convention will be held at the Smart Plaza, Road Suites 17 and 18, in Mesa, Ariz. Events include AD&D®, BATTLE FOR MOSCOW®, SQUAD LEADER®, and BATTLETECH® games. Other activities include computer games, Japanimation, open gaming, and a Miniatures Fest featuring WWII microarmor, American Civil War, British colonial, and SF miniatures gaming. There is no admission fee, and all

events are free. Send an SASE to: ECONOMYCON IV c/o Roaming Panther Game Co., 2740 S. Alma School Rd., #16, Mesa AZ 85202.

## GENGHIS CON XII, February 15-17

The Denver Gamers' Assoc. presents this convention at the Sheraton of Lakewood. Events include VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC®, CIVILIZATION®, KINGMAKER®, ASL®, and BATTLETECH® games, with official RPGA™ Network tournaments including PARANOIA®, D&D®, and AD&D® games. Other activities include miniatures events, auctions, art and figure-painting contests, seminars, demos, and the PUFFING BILLY® railroad tournament. Guests include Jean Rabe, Darwin Bromley, and Richard Berg. Registration: \$15/weekend preregistered. Write to: Denver Gamers' Assoc., P.O. Box 440058, Aurora CO 80044; or call: (303)680-7824.

## ORCCON 14, February 15-18

This convention will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton. All types of family, board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer games are featured. Get bargains at the flea markets, auctions, and exhibitors' area. Also featured are seminars, demos, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, P.O. Box 3849, Torrance CA 90510-3849; or call: (213) 326-9440.

## WARCON '91, February 15-17

Texas A&M's MSC NOVA is proud to once again present this gaming convention on the Texas A&M University campus in College Station, Texas. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH®, CHAMPIONS®, CYBERPUNK®, STAR TREK®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, TORC®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, and ROBOTECH® games, plus tournaments. Other activities include contests, demos, computer games, and a dealers' room. Registration: \$12 preregistered. Write to: MSC NOVA, P.O. Box J-1, College Station TX 77844; or call: (409) 845-1515.

## BIG CON '91, February 16

This charity convention will be held at Chaplaincy Square, Student Centre, Bristow Square, Edinburgh, Scotland. Highlights include competition scenarios, the auction, the video room, the computer section, the miniatures painting contest, the SF section, and any number of games. Registration: £1. Write to: BIG CON '91, GEAS, Societies Centre, 60 The Pleasance, Edinburgh, EH8 9TJ, UNITED KINGDOM; or call: 031-662 4427.

## ECLECTICON 5, February 16-18

This SF/fantasy convention will be held at the Sacramento Hilton Inn in Sacramento, Calif. Guests of honor include Greg Bear, Rick Sternbach, and Rhea Stone. The dead guest of honor is Jules Verne. Registration: \$30. Proceeds will benefit the Sacramento Public Library and the Children's Burn Unit of the University of California at Davis Medical Center, among other charities. There will also be a blood drive at the convention on Feb. 17th. Write to: Publicity Committee, ECLECTICON 5, #176 P.O. Box 19040, Sacramento CA 95814; or call: (916) 421-8365 and leave a message.

## NOT-A-CON III, THE SEARCH FOR MOC February 22-24

This convention will be held in the Palmetto Ballroom on the Clemson University campus in Clemson, S.C. Events include RPGA™ AD&D®, other AD&D®, SHADOWRUN®, TOP SECRET/S.I.™, and war-gaming tournaments, as well as open



ROLEMASTER\*, SPACFMASTER\*, and TORG\* games. Registration: \$15. Write to: NOT-A-CON III, 726 Riverbank Commons, 250 Elm St., Clemson SC 29631; or call (803)653-5030 and ask for Wayne Chastain, Andy Berg, or Jeff Peake.

#### **TOTAL CONFUSION V, February 22-24**

This convention will be held at the Sheraton Worcester Hotel and Conference Center in Worcester Mass. Events include AD&D®, GURPS\*, BATTLETECH\*, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, DIPLOMACY\*, ASSAULT\*, CAR WARS\*, DC HEROES\*, and AXIS & ALLIES\* games. Over 120 games are scheduled. Other activities include a costume competition and a miniatures-painting contest. Registration: \$8/day or \$20/weekend preregistered, or \$10/day at the door. Write to: TOTAL CONFUSION, P.O. Box 1463, Worcester MA 01607; or call: (508) 987-1530.

#### **GAMER'S DELIGHT '91, February 23 \***

The Quebec Gamers' Assoc. (A.Q.J.S.), will hold this convention at John F. Kennedy High School in Montreal, Quebec. Events include an AD&D® tournament, plus board games and miniatures. There will be three playing sessions. Registration: \$13 (U.S.) before Feb. 15, or \$16 (U.S.) at the door. A.Q.J.S. members will receive a \$2 discount. Write to: A.Q.J.S., Box 63, Station "M," Montreal, Quebec, CANADA. H1V 3L6; or call Larry at: (514) 278-5292.

#### **CHIMERACON VII, March 1-3**

This seventh annual SF/fantasy convention will be held at the Union of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C. Guests of honor include Fred Chappell, Alan Wold, and Gavin and Yvonne Frost. Write to: Shannon Turlington, c/o CHIMERACON, 306 Avery UNC-CH, Chapel Hill, NC 27514; or call (919)933-2912.

#### **EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN '91, March 1-3**

This gaming convention will be held at the Student Center of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Ill. Events include RPGA™ AD&D® tournaments, miniatures judging, and a game auction. Registration: \$8 preregistered, or \$5/, day. Admission on Friday, the 1st, is free to all. Send a business-size SASE to: S.I.U. Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale IL 62901-4425; or call (618)529-5317.

#### **GUILD FEST '91, March 2-3**

This convention will be held at the State University of New York at Binghamton campus. Events include CYBERPUNK 2020\*, AD&D®, GURPS\*, and RUNEQUEST\* games, with a dealers' room. Registration \$3/day or \$5/weekend preregistered; \$4/day or \$7/weekend at the door. Write to: Gamers' Guild, P.O. Box 2000 c/o SUNY-Binghamton, Binghamton NY 13901.

#### **BASHCON '91, March 8-10**

This sixth annual convention, sponsored by the Benevolent Adventurers' Strategic Headquarters, will be held at the Student Union Auditorium at the University of Toledo's main campus in Toledo, Ohio. Over 150 game events will be featured, including RPGA™ tournaments, plus movies, a miniatures contest, an exhibitors' area, two auctions, and an honored speaker or two. Registration: \$3/weekend or \$1 for Friday, \$2/day for Saturday and Sunday. There will be no preregistration. Games cost \$.50 each. Send an SASE to: UT-BASH, c/o Student Activities Office, University of Toledo, Toledo OH 43606-9987.

#### **CALCON 6, March 8-10 \***

This gaming convention will be held at the

Sandman Inn in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Over 100 featured events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH\*, SYSTEM 7\*, PARANOIA\*, WARHAMMER 40,000\*, TUNNELS & TROLLS\*, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, and TITANS\* games. Other activities include a game auction, BATTLETECH\* computer games by A.M.U.C., miniatures painting, artists, and play-testing. Registration: \$8 until March 1; \$12 at the door with cheaper visitor rates, plus game fees. Write to: CALCON 6, Box 22206, Gulf Canada Square RPO, 401-9 AVE SW, Calgary, ALBERTA, CANADA, T2P-4J6; or call Paul Spenard at: (403) 286-3347.

#### **OWLCON XII, March 8-10**

Rice University's WARP and RSFAFA will hold this convention at Rice University in Houston; Texas. Tournaments will be held for RUNEQUEST\*, PARANOIA\*, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, CAR WARS\*, TRAVELLER\*, DIPLOMACY\*, ILLUMINATI\*, CIVILIZATION\*, BATTLETECH\*, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, ASL\*, WORLD IN FLAMES\*, and AD&D® games. Prizes will be awarded for some tournaments. Registration: \$10 preregistered, or \$12/weekend at the door. Single-day prices vary. Write to: RSFAFA, OWLCON, P.O. Box 1892, Houston TX 77251.

#### **SILICON VI, March 8-10**

This convention, sponsored by the Society for Interactive Literature, is dedicated to live-action role-playing games. It will be held at the Annapolis Holiday Inn in Annapolis, Md. Four live-action games will be run: "Cafe Casablanca," "Small Town," "Steeplechase," and "See Jane Run Again." A mini-game, "MASKS," will be run Friday night. Registration: \$35 until March 1, or \$40 at the door. Write to: Terilee Edwards-Hewitt, 3454 S. Utah St. B-1, Arlington VA 22206-1942.

#### **LEHICON IV, March 15-17**

The Lehigh Valley Gamers Assoc., will host this gaming convention at the George Washington Motor Lodge in Allentown, Pa. Events include RPGA™ events, with AD&D®, BATTLETECH\*, SHADOWRUN\*, TOP SECRET/S.I.™, CAR WARS\*, MEGATRAVELLER\*, CYBERPUNK\*, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, STAR FLEET BATTLES\*, TWILIGHT! 2000\*, ASL\*, SUPREMACY\*, DIPLOMACY\*, EURORAILS\*, and other games. Other activities include 24-hour open gaming, comics, dealers, SCA demos, and a miniatures-painting contest. Special lodging rates are available. Registration: \$12/day (less for Friday and Sunday) or \$18/weekend. Write to: LEHICON IV, P.O. Box 1864, Bethlehem PA 18016-1864; or call: (215) 538-6109 after 6 P.M.

#### **BATTLETECH\* NORTHEAST CHAMPIONSHIPS III, March 16-17**

This is the official BATTLETECH\* regional competition—singles and team events—with prizes supplied by FASA Corporation. Registration: \$20 preregistered by March 8; \$25 thereafter. Write to: The Gamemaster, 212A Massachusetts Ave., Arlington MA 02174; or call: (617) 641-1580.

#### **AGGIECON XXII, March 21-24**

The largest and oldest annual SF/fantasy convention in the Southwest will be held on the campus of Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Guests include Fred Saberhagen, Lynn Abbey, Keith Parkinson, Marv Wolfman, and Larry Elmore. Activities include RPGA™ tournaments, a dealers' room, game shows, a hall costume contest and masquerade ball, SF films, Japanimation, video rooms, and live-action games. Registration: \$13 before March 1, or \$16

thereafter. One day passes are \$10. Write to: AGGIECON XXII, MSC Cepheid Variable, Box J-I, College Station TX 77844; or call: (409) 845-1515.

#### **CONTEST VIII, March 22-24**

Sponsored by the Tactical Simulation Society, this convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Holidome in Tulsa, Okla. Events include AD&D®, AXIS & ALLIES\*, and other role-playing, board, miniatures, and computer games, with a large dealers' room and an auction. Write to: TSS, P.O. Box 4726, Tulsa OK 74104.

#### **SIMCON XIII, March 22-24**

This gaming convention will be held the University of Rochester River campus in Rochester, N.Y. Role-playing events (including an R. Talsorian-sanctioned CYBERPUNK\* tournament), miniatures events, board games, and a miniatures contest are scheduled. Registration: \$7 before March 4, or \$10 thereafter. College students with an I.D. receive a \$2 discount. Write to: SIMCON, CPU Box 277146, River Station, Rochester NY 14627.

#### **ABBYTHON 9, March 23-24**

The Abbython Adventure Guild will host its ninth annual 24-hour-marathon gaming convention at the Community Center in Abbyville, Kans. Registration: \$7 before Feb. 28; none accepted thereafter. Send an SASE to: Abbython Adventure Guild, P.O. Box 96, Abbyville KS 67510; or call: (316) 286-5303.

#### **FRON VI, March 23-24**

The 252 Rollenspielverein in Frankfurt, Germany, will host this convention at the Stadthalle Bergen-Enkheim, Marktstrasse, Frankfurt-Bergen-Enkheim (a suburb to the east of Frankfurt). Events include over 20 games in hundreds of events (many in English), a BLOOD BOWL\* tournament, and SCA demos. Registration: DM 5/weekend or DM 3/day. GMs and people in costume get free admission. Write to: M. Kliehm, In der Reomerstadt 164, 6000 Frankfurt/Main 50, GERMANY; or call (Frankfurt): (069) 574-579.

#### **SCRYCON '91, March 23**

Sponsored by The Seekers of the Crystal Monolith gaming club, this convention will be held at the Oakwood School in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Events include RPGA™ AD&D® games, alternate games, a painted-miniatures contest, and a used-game flea market. Registration: \$6 preregistered, or \$8 at the door. Send an SASE to: SCRYCON '91, P.O. Box 896, Pleasant Valley NY 12569. Space is limited; preregister!

#### **UNIVERSICON V, March 24**

This fifth-annual charity convention, sponsored by the Brandeis Science Fiction & Comic Book Club, will be held at the Usdan Student Center on the Brandeis University campus in Waltham, Mass. Guests include Gordon R. Dickson, Mike Gold, Ken Penders, and others. Activities include AD&D®, DC HEROES\*, PARANOIA\*, and TOON\* games, a movie room, a costume contest, a dealers' room, panels, and the charity auction, with this year's proceeds going to the Whale Adoption Project. Registration: \$6 at the door. Write to: Jarett Weintraub, 14 Dartmouth St., Waltham MA 02154; or call: (617) 894-2604.

#### **GOTHCON XV, March 29-31**

This convention, sponsored by the Bifrost, Chaos Apes, Skymning, and Ygdrasil gaming clubs, will be held at Munkebacksgymnasiet, Ernst Torulfsgatan 1, in Gothenburg, Sweden. Events include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU\*,

MEGATRAVELLER\*, PARANOIA\*, ROLE-MASTER/MERP\*, RUNEQUEST\* (3rd Ed.), ASL\*, CAR WARS\*, DIPLOMACY\*, and ILLUMINATI\* tournaments, as well as several independent events. Other activities include a live-action chess game, dealers' rooms, fantasy artists, and an auction. Registration: 150 Swedish Kronor (\$30 U.S.) before Feb. 15 (140 SKr for SWEROC members), plus tournament fees. No preregistrations accepted after Feb. 15. One-day tickets, if available, will be sold at the door for 75 SKr (\$15 U.S.)/day. Write to: GOTHCON XV c/o Bertil Jonell, P.O. Box 154, S-43900 Onsala, SWEDEN; or call: +46 300-61004.

#### **MSU IN CONTROL, March 29-30**

This gaming convention will be held in the Grand Ballroom of the Student Center at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Ky. Events include CLAY-O-RAMA, BATTLETECH\*, AD&D® 2nd Edition, SHADOWRUN\*, and WARHAMMER 40,000\* tournaments. Other activities include a video room, costume and figure-painting contests, and dealers. Registration: \$5, or \$4 if you are in costume. Game masters also receive discounts. Write to: Jemearl Smith, 424 East Maxwell #2, Lexington KY 40503; or call: (606) 255-9599 after 7 P.M. Eastern time.

#### **ROUNDCON VI, April 5-7**

The Round Table Gaming Society will host this convention at the Russell House at the University of South Carolina campus, in Columbia, S.C. Events include AD&D®, SHADOWRUN\*, PUFFING BILLY\* (including 1830\*, RAIL BARON\*, and a Mayfair railroad game), and board-game tournaments. Other one-round tournaments will be held for CHAMPIONS\*, TALISMAN\*, TITAN\*, B-17 SQUADRON\*, CIRCUS MAXIMUS\*, and AD&D® games. Prizes will be awarded for all tournaments. Registration: \$5/weekend before March 1, or \$7/weekend thereafter. Write to: Round Table Gaming Society USC, P.O. Box 80018, Columbia SC; or call Trella at: (803) 779-1924.

#### **CONNCON '91, April 6-7**

This convention will be held at the Danbury Hilton Inn in Danbury, Conn. Jean Rabe will be the guest of honor. Many first-run RPGA™ Network events will be held, including a Masters and a Grandmasters AD&D® event, a Masters CALL OF CTHULHU\* event, and a team AD&D® event. Other activities include: role-playing, miniatures, and war games; a banquet; an awards ceremony; and an RPGA™ Network members' meeting. Registration: \$15 preregistered until March 22, or \$20 thereafter. The preregistration fee includes three free games; registration after March 22 does not. Write to: CONNCON, P.O. Box 444, Sherman CT 06784.

#### **TECHNICON 8, April 12-14**

This SF/fantasy convention will be held at the Donaldson Brown Center on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg, Va. Guests include Diane Carey, Greg Brodeur, Larry Elmore, Ruth Thompson, Don Sakers, and John "Fuzzface" McMahon. Activities include SF Jeopardy, live RPGs, panels, a play, an art show, films, and dealers. Write to: TECHNICON 8, c/o VTSFFC, P.O. Box 256, Blacksburg VA 24063-0256; or call: (703) 953-1214.

#### **BAMACON V, April 19-21**

This convention will be held at the Ferguson Center on the University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Guests include Alan Dean Foster, Hal Clement, Margaret Weis, Keith Parkinson, Larry Elmore, Dave Arneson, and Allen Hammack. There will also be a \$1,000

cash prize for the best AD&D® game team at this convention. Many other prizes will also be awarded. Activities include an art show/auction, a banquet, dances, movies, and dealers. Registration: \$15 by Feb. 28; \$20 by March 31; and \$25 thereafter. One-day memberships and dealer passes are also available. Write to: BAMACON V, University of Alabama, P.O. Box 6542 Tuscaloosa AL 35486; or call: (205) 758-4577 or 348-3127.

#### **CAPCON XIV, April 19-21**

The Ohio State University Miniatures and Gaming Assoc. (OSUMGA) will hold this convention in the Ohio Union on the OSU Columbus campus in Columbus, Ohio. Activities include miniatures, board, and role-playing games covering all time periods and genres. Admission: \$3/day. Write to: OSUMGA/CAPCON, Box 21, the Ohio Union, 1739 N. High St., Columbus OH 43210; or call Jill Moody at: (614) 267-2649.

#### **CONDUIT, April 19-21**

Located at the Quality Inn in Salt Lake City, Utah, this SF/fantasy/gaming convention will feature such guests as Barbara Hambly, Erick Wujcik, and Derek Fegestad. Events include tournaments in AD&D® 2nd Edition, ROLEMASTER\*, TMN TURTLES\*, RIFTS\*, ROBOTECH\*, BATTLETECH\*, WARHAMMER 40,000\*, SPACE HULK\*, SHADOWRUN\*, CYBERPUNK\*, and STAR FLEET BATTLES\* games. Other activities include films, Japanese animation, an art show, a masquerade, panels, dealers, and open gaming. Registration: \$18 until March 15; \$22 at the door. Write to: CONDUIT, c/o David Lee Powell, 2566 Blaine Ave., Salt Lake City UT 84108-3359; or call: (801) 467-9517.

#### **I-CON X, April 19-21**

This convention will once again be held at the State University of New York, Stony Brook campus. Guests include Ken Rolston, Gary Gyax, Steve Jackson, and Greg Costikyan. Activities include gaming, a writer's workshop, autograph sessions, a "meet the pros" party, dozens of dealers and more. Registration: \$25/weekend at the door, less in advance. One-day passes are also available. Write to: I-CON X, P.O. Box 550, Stony Brook NY 11790.

#### **PENTECON '91, April 19-21**

The Cornell Strategic Simulations Society will hold this convention at the Goldwin Smith Hall on the Cornell University campus in Ithaca, NY. Events include AD&D®, TRAVELLER\*, PARANOIA\*, DIPLOMACY\*, CAR WARS\*, AXIS & ALLIES\*, ASL\*, and CIVILIZATION\* games. Other activities include miniatures painting and trivia contests. Write to: PENTECON '91, c/o Peace Studies Program, 180 Uris Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853; or call Shelley at: (607) 272-1339.

#### **IMPACT 0.6, April 20**

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Central in Omaha, Nebraska. Activities include table-top and role-playing games from 8 A.M. until midnight. Registration: \$5. Write to: IMPACT, P.O. Box 4486, Omaha NE 68104.

#### **LAGACON 10, April 20**

This convention will be held at Kaspar's Arc, north of Lebanon, Pa. Events include AD&D® and BATTLETECH\* tournaments, plus AD&D®, ASL\*, BATTLETECH\*, AXIS & ALLIES\*, SHADOWRUN\* games. There will also be dealers and food will be available. Registration: \$5 preregistered, \$7.50 at the door. Write to: Lebanon Area Gamers, 806 Cumberland St., Lebanon

PA 17042; or call: (717) 274-8706. Make checks payable to Keith Roth.

#### **OPCON '91, April 20**

This convention, sponsored by the OPRF SF/F Club, will be held at the Oak Park River Forest High School in Oak Park, Ill. Guests include Phyllis Eisenstein, Robert Shea, and Richard Knaak. Activities include RPG tournaments, a silent auction, films and videos, autograph signings, a trivia contest, and a vendor's room. Registration: \$2. Write to: Sandra Price, OPRF SF/F Club, Oak River Park High School, 201 N. Scoville Ave., Oak Park IL 60302.

#### **LITTLE WARS '91, April 26-28**

This miniatures-oriented convention, sponsored by the Historical Miniatures Gaming Society (HMGS), will be held at the Zion Leisure Center in Zion, Ill. Miniatures events will span historical times and beyond. Registration: \$8/day or \$12/weekend, with a \$2 discount for HMGS members. There are event fees. Judges and players are needed. There will be a judge's discount and a large dealers' area. Write to: Robert Bigelow, c/o Friends Hobby Shop, 1411 Washington St., Waukegan IL 60085; or call: (708) 336-0790.

#### **AGOG IV, April 27-28**

The University Of Arizona Historical Games Society will hold this convention at the Student Union Main Hall on the University of Arizona campus in Tucson, Arizona. Tournaments include AD&D®, CHAMPIONS\*, GURPS\*, BATTLETECH\*, and WARHAMMER 40,000\* games. Other activities include open gaming, a game auction, and a miniatures-painting contest. Write to: AGOG IV, 3150 E. Monte Vista #A, Tucson AZ 85716; or call: (602) 327-3517.

#### **BOISE FANTASY ARTS CONVENTION IV April 27-28**

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Boise, Idaho. Activities include workshops, contests, dealers, gaming, movies, demos, and an art show. Registration: \$19 until April 1; \$23 at the door. Supporting memberships and one-day costs are also available. Write to: BFAC, P.O. Box 8602, Boise ID 83702; or call (208) 454-2835.

#### **PLATTECON DELTA, April 27-28**

This gaming convention will be held at the Student Center on the UW-Platteville campus in Platteville, Wis. Events include AD&D® games, miniatures games, dealers, door prizes, and numerous games. Registration: \$4/day or \$5/weekend in advance; \$5/day and \$7/weekend at the door. Write to: Platteville Gaming Assoc., Student Center, 1 University Plaza, UW-Platteville, Platteville WI 53818.

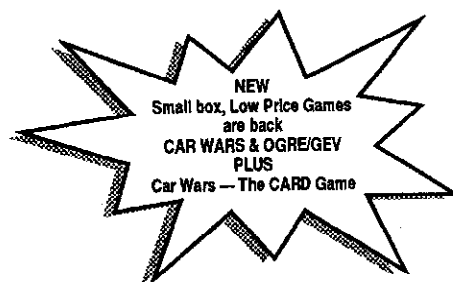
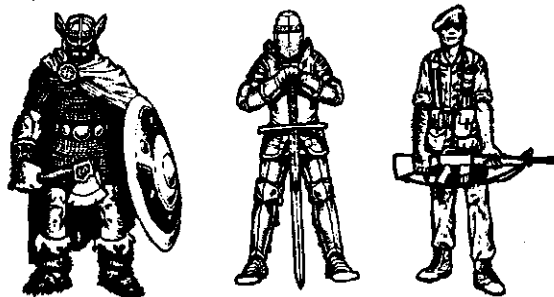
How effective was your convention listing? If you are a convention organizer, please write to the editors and let us know if our "Convention Calendar" served you needs. Your comments are always welcome.

### **Out of Supplies?**

Write for a free catalog from the Mail Order Hobby Shop, c/o TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147 U.S.A.



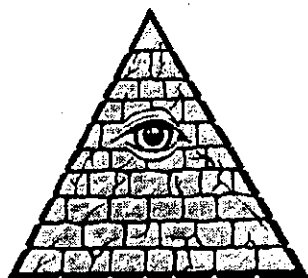
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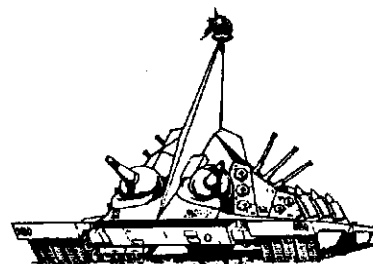
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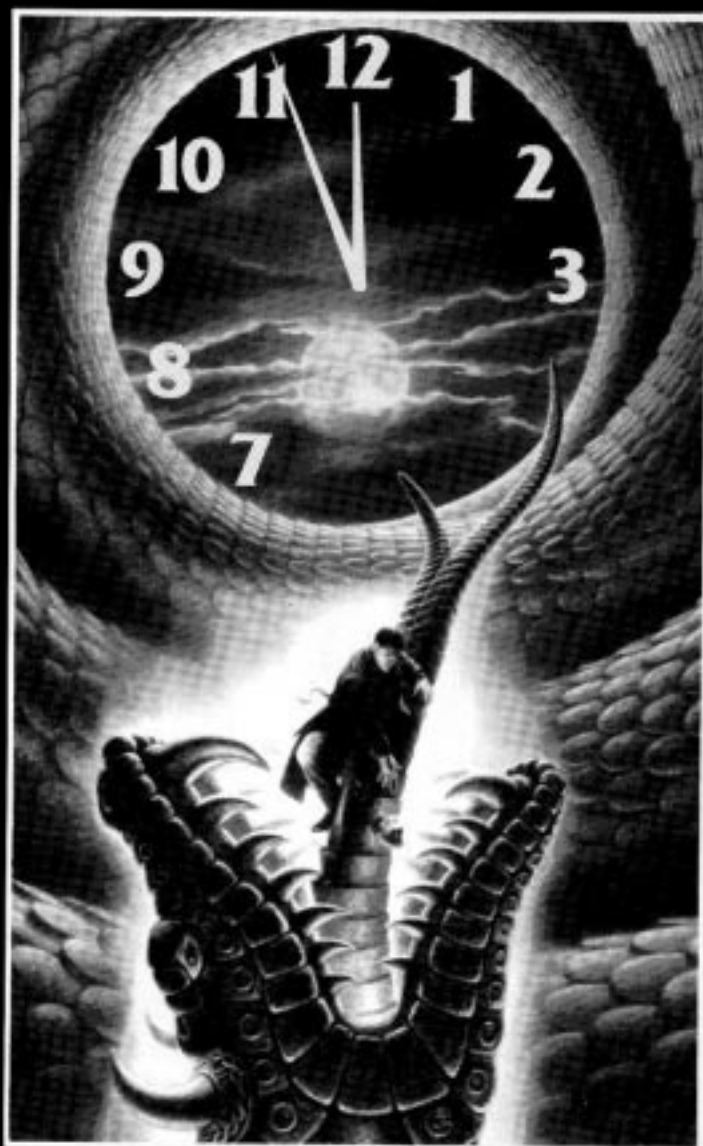


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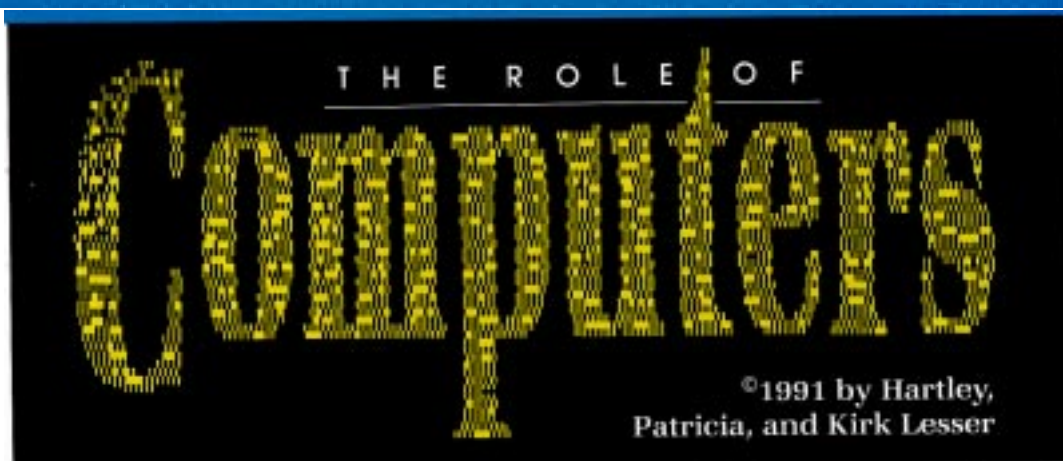
# L. RON HUBBARD

**AUTHOR OF 29 NATIONAL BESTSELLERS**

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Wing Commander  
(Origin)

## Wing Commander: The Top Gun of space-war games

The number of games being received for review is becoming quite staggering. As we really do try to review each good game we receive, we are cutting out our new products section and will use the space to review products and give hints.

[Editor's note: Alas! The winners of the Beastie Award will appear in the next issue, due to circumstances beyond everyone's control. Really. Promise. We mean it this time.]

### Reviews

**Wing Commander** \*\*\*\*\*  
Origin (512-328-0926)  
PC/MS-DOS version, with Roland LAPC-1  
sound board and VGA graphics \$69.95  
Yep, our first six-star review! There is no doubt in our minds that *Wing Commander* is the finest spaceflight adventure/simulation ever to come to PC/MS-DOS

machines. The animation and the stirring theme music blasting from the Roland sound system makes *Wing Commander* more like participating in a movie rather than playing a game.

This game is surprisingly easy to learn and yet provides many challenges for even the best gamer. You start your career as a Confederation 2nd Lieutenant on a space carrier named *Tiger's Claw*. From the carrier, you are sent on various missions against the Kilrathi enemy. Your missions range from simple strikes to escorting,

patrolling, or defending Confederation territory or ships.

The action begins in a bar on the *Tiger's Claw*, where you are apparently about to engage the enemy in a flight simulator. You are asked for your last name and a code name. After entering the information, you exit the simulator and view the surrounding bar. We are talking about simply the finest graphics we've ever seen on a VGA display. You actually feel as though you have become one with the action.

You can talk to Shotglass, the bartender, or any of the patrons. Sometimes parlaying with fellow officers will give you a hint or a tip on how to beat the Kilrathi. A chalkboard on the back wall of the bar lists the names of all pilots on the *Tiger's Claw*, the number of sorties each has flown, and number of Kilrathi kills for each pilot. Finally, you can actually practice missions against the Kilrathi on the training simulator without risking bodily

#### Computer game's ratings

X	Not recommended
*	Poor
**	Fair
***	Good
****	Excellent
*****	Superb



*Wing Commander (Origin)*

harm. This is by far the best way to learn how to pilot your ship and to study Kilrathi tactics.

When you are done in the bar, you can enter the barracks, where you can save or load games. The save-game slots are represented by bunks, eight in all. Saved games are represented by people resting on cots.

You can also view earned service medals. The display reveals your rank, any fighter qualification ribbons, performance service ribbons, graduation service ribbons, and any medals for exceptional behavior. Such medals include a Bronze Star, Gold Star, and Silver Star for exceptional bravery under fire and successfully facing overwhelming opposition. Also included are the Terran Confederation Medal of Honor, the highest medal awarded to military personnel, and the Golden Sun that is

awarded for surviving the destruction of one's ship through ejection.

When you feel qualified to try a mission, exit the barracks and enter the briefing room. Here, Commander Halycon assigns you your mission and shows you on a map where you will need to travel in order to accomplish the scenario. He also advises you of any ships, mines, or asteroids in the area, so pay close attention to his words. This scene reminded us of finely crafted Japanese cartoons, and it is just as well animated. The serious expression on Halycon's face during the briefing, and the close-ups of individual pilots asking questions about the mission, all add to the excitement of the yet-to-be-experienced scenarios.

Following the briefing, the screen shows pilots scrambling to their fighters, and you

climbing into your fighter. These animations are extremely well detailed, even to the point of showing small dents and paint chips on your fighter craft. Again, the animation is exceptionally smooth and happens to be some of the best we've seen on any computer system.

Once you are ready to go, you switch to a first-person perspective and the action begins.

The fighter screen reveals your forward view, as well as all of your ship's instruments—indicators for speed, radar, blasters, and armor and shields, as well as two video display units. On the left, the display shows your current weapons, both guns and missiles, as well as a damage display for registering internal hits to your ship. The right video display unit shows targeting screens and the range to your navigation point, and also has a communication screen. Each of the various fighters you may eventually pilot have different locations and configurations for this instrumentation. Other available views include battle, tactical, chase plane, and missile views.

Completing your mission requires you to fly to the navigation points, as Halycon ordered. In order to accomplish this, you line up your ship with the navigation cross hairs on the screen, or you can allow the autopilot to take care of things for you. The autopilot will continue on to the navigation point until you reach a hazard or encounter the enemy. At that point, you regain control of your ship.

When flying near a hazard, a mine, or an asteroid field, you must use your flying skills to maneuver around these dangerous objects. This requires practice and, perhaps, several lives before you get the hang of it. The animation shows the detailed asteroids or mines, as well as portions of the same should you happen to destroy an incoming object.

If you sustain damage, your shield indicator visibly reduces. It will regenerate slowly if you receive no further hits. If you have been unlucky enough to allow your shields to be reduced to nothing, your ship's armor starts to absorb damage. If the armor is totally destroyed, you'll start to lose ship's systems. This damage is displayed in finely detailed animation: panels or wires blow up, leaving scarred remains on the console. If enough hits are sustained, your ship blows up. You then see your own funeral, complete with gun salute as your casket-encased body is launched from the carrier into space, complete with funeral music.

Encountering the enemy is what makes this game totally unique. It's so much fun that several dinners have been missed at our house. From the moment you spot the enemy on radar to the moment you see the explosion and debris flung throughout space as you make a kill, this is definitely the best animation in the game.

When you spot the enemy, the targeter shows you what type of ships you are







facing and their ranges from you. Your weapon capabilities depend upon the ship you are piloting. For the light Hornet, you are limited to laser cannons, two "dumb" Dart missiles, and one heat-seeking missile. At the other extreme, the awesome Raptor has neutron guns as well as a mass-driver cannon. These can be used separately or in tandem to create havoc among the enemy. The Raptor also possesses two heat-seeking missiles, an image-recognition missile (it goes after one target after locking in on its image rather than following heat patterns), a FF (friend or foe) missile (locks onto any enemy because it doesn't broadcast a certain sound that all Confederation ships send out), and a mine. Other Confederation ships have some of those weapons alone or in various combinations.

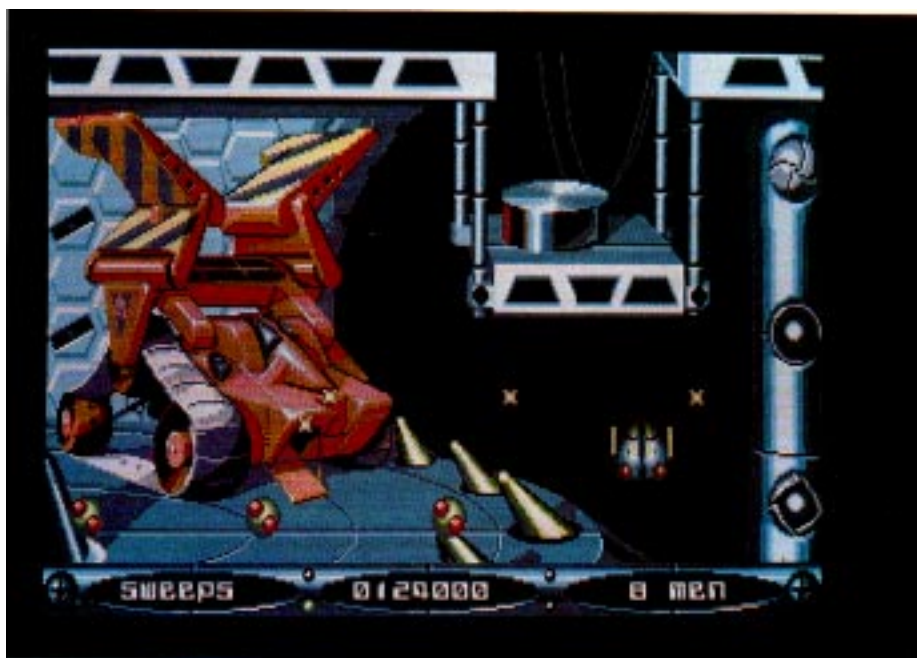
The targeter on your view screen shows the status of the enemy ship by shading damaged or destroyed parts of the ship's shields or armor. Some of the enemy ships have better shields and armor, and take many hits to destroy. However, these ships do have weak spots, and a well-placed or lucky shot to a certain part may cripple or even destroy the ship.

Each enemy ship uses different maneuvers and is armed with different weapons. Some will dodge and try to out-maneuver you, while more heavily-powered ships will fly straight at you and try to knock you out fast. Some are also equipped with missiles and will fire these at you. It takes a well-trained flyer to outmaneuver them. These hostile aliens are also not idiots and, if they are in trouble, may try to escape. Also out in space are Kilrathi aces that are hard to kill. If you kill one of these aces, you are a really good pilot.

Your wingman can also help. You can communicate with him and give him orders to break off and attack, stay by your wing, return to formation, return to base, help against an enemy that's attacking you, or even attack a target that you yourself have in your targeter.

Each wingman has a different personality, and it shows in his flying and combat techniques. Some will ignore your orders and fly into combat, trying to become heroes, while others are smart and only engage the enemy at a prime moment. Wingmen are not just a diversion—they also destroy enemy ships. You'd better be aware of what you are targeting, as you could hit your wingman, who is chasing and firing at the same target. We have also found ourselves suddenly coming eye to eye with a wingman and accidentally ramming him, sometimes resulting in our demise. Origin did an excellent job of giving the enemy and your wingmen individual and unique personalities.

After completing the mission, whether it's success or failure, the player lands at the *Tiger's Claw*. Here, you'll see how badly beaten up your ship is. Afterward, Halycon will scold or commend you at a debriefing. He will also tell you how many ships you were able to destroy. Sometimes



*If It Moves, Shoot It!* (Broderbund Software)



*King's Bounty* (New World)

you will be asked to see Halycon later where he will promote you or reassign you to a new ship with a new wingman. Also, you may be given a medal. With wonderful victory music, you will go through the acceptance of a cherished medal. From that, you will reenter the bar.

*Wing Commander* is a fantastic, absolutely top-notch simulation. The graphics and animation are extraordinary. The objects in space are not polygon filled but beautifully drawn, colored, and animated. Every section of the game is painstakingly detailed, from a battle-scarred ship returning from combat to the barracks where the fluorescent lights flicker and water

drips from the ceiling.

The game is not complicated and will keep you glued to your IBM for hours and hours. *Wing Commander* is worth far more than its cost and is certainly one of Origin's finest works. We simply cannot wait for Origin's expansion missions to be released. You absolutely have to purchase *Wing Commander*, if you want the best PC/MS-DOS game in your software library.

#### **Armor Alley**

Three-Sixty Pacific (408-879-9144)  
Macintosh IIx version,  
16-color mode

\*\*\*\*\*

\$49.95



Many years ago, an arcade/strategy game became quite a hit on the Apple II computer: *Rescue Raiders*, from Sir-Tech Software. Now, Three-Sixty has apparently obtained that code and has rewritten this game for the Macintosh computer family. And it has done a marvelous job of translating this strategy game.

The object is simply to destroy an enemy base. You do this by ordering forth infantry, engineers, tanks, missile launchers, and vans with radar-jamming Equipment (the enemy is throwing similar elements at you). Your main weapon is a helicopter, armed with missiles, bombs, and machine guns. It can carry as many as five paratroopers at a time. The paratroopers become quite valuable as you progress in game levels, and you need them to assault enemy bunkers.

Don't run out of fuel, and watch for shrapnel from exploding enemy elements. Fire missiles at enemy helicopters but don't buzz too close to a targeted chopper; should your missile blow it up, you could go down with the enemy ship.

You are given funds with which to purchase your units. The elements of strategy involve deciding which units to send forth at which time. You might find storing your funds and issuing a convoy of vehicles and infantry the best move, or you might prefer a continuous stream of single units. Whatever your selection, save 20 bags of money to buy helicopters. You don't want to run out of these highly potent weapons. If you do, you lose.

*Armor Alley* is highly addictive. It can be played in either 2- (black and white) or 16-color mode on a Macintosh and is quite good in either mode. Your high scores are saved, and you'll find yourself eager for battle after battle with this great arcade/strategy offering,

#### **If It Moves, Shoot It!**

Broderbund Software (415-492-3299)

PC/MS-DOS version,

with VGA graphics

\$29.95

Return to the good old days of yesterday, when everything on your computer screen was grist for your guns. Add state-of-the-art VGA graphics, and this offering will please any die-hard arcade gamer.

*If It Moves, Shoot It!* is a grand arcade shoot-em-up that demands you attack everything that comes on-screen. Whether it's scrolling, wiggling, or firing, it's your duty to destroy it. The program has one of the best joy-stick calibration routines we've seen, enabling you to obtain the best targeting possible. You can also use the keyboard, but the joy stick offers the most exacting fire.

You're battling Korts, hoping to free lost settlers in the Valley of the Ancients. There is absolutely no doubt that you'll spend a couple of hours learning how best to manage each various Kort attack upon your craft. You'll also have to survive the Guardians as well.

However, don't expect anything more than shooting; pure and simple. After several hours, it does tend to get a little old. We switched to a strategy game and returned to this offering just to flex our joy-sticking fingers.

#### **King's Bounty**

New World Computing (818-999-0606)

Apple II version

\$39.95

All is gong well in the world—King Maximus holds the Sceptre of Order, thus driving chaos from the lands. However, one fateful night, a rectangular void appeared behind King Maximus and a scaly dragon's head appeared. A hideous claw reaches through the portal and steals the powerful sceptre from the stunned king.

You have just retired from the hero business and are respected and feared by many. Just when you were finally settling into retirement, a messenger requests that you see the king, who asks you to regain the stolen sceptre before chaos runs amok throughout the lands.

Each of the game's villains, as well as the Eight Artifacts of Power, hold a piece of the map that indicates where the Sceptre of Order is hidden. The center of the map is held by Arech Dragonbreath himself, the mastermind behind the theft of the sceptre. Do not try to find the Sceptre until you have found the last piece of the puzzle.

You may choose to play a knight, a sorceress, a barbarian, or a paladin. I recommend you play a knight for your first try, as the knight initially receives strong troops. He also receives a high payment each week from the king, and the knight is charismatic, enabling him to convince more and better troops or monsters to join his army.

One of the benefits of playing a sorceress is that you do not have to pay anyone to train you to use magic. You also have a large spell memory and can cast a wide variety of spells. However, the sorceress receives the lowest payment per week and cannot convince many of the powerful troops or monsters to join her army.

The paladin is a fine blend between the knight and the sorceress. Though the paladin does not have to be taught the basics of magic before casting spells, he does have a quick learning speed and can become quite powerful later on.

Finally, the barbarian class is similar to all three of the previous classes. The barbarian is tied with the knight for leadership capabilities, has good starting troops, and has the best payment per week. Like the sorceress, he has a low amount of money at the start of the game. Like the knight, the barbarian must be taught the virtues of magic. He learns his spells very slowly and has limited spell memory. Though he may seem to be the easiest to play at first, he becomes very difficult to utilize effectively as the game proceeds, due to his lack of spells.

The game has positive factors. The graphics are reasonably good, and it is a well-thought-out game. The battles work well and are not confusing. Lastly, the commands in *King's Bounty* are easy to use.

There are some problems, though. First: You, the main character, cannot fight in the battles. You can only direct where the army goes, and you can cast offensive and defensive spells only through your mercenaries.

Second, you have to pay certain creatures, such as wolves and ghosts, who really have no need of money. Third, if your army is defeated and you are killed, you must start back at King Maximus's castle with a weaker army. The deadline for returning the Sceptre of Order remains the same. This means that if you want to win the game, you must restart the entire adventure.

This brings up another point. If you do have to restart, you have to retrieve your copy program, copy disk side B onto another disk, then restart the game again. This is about a five or six minute process.

When you are in battle and you want to retreat, you find that such an action is impossible. The only way you can retreat is to disband the army, acting as though you have died. I think there really should be another alternative.

If you want a challenging game with hours of fun with hundreds of possibilities, and if you can ignore a few annoying problems, I recommend *King's Bounty*. —reviewed by Jager McConnell

#### **Tangled Tales: The Misadventures of a Wizard's Apprentice**

Origin (512-328-0926)

Apple II version

\$29.95

Picture yourself as a young apprentice wizard without friends, spells, or money. You are about to go out and learn your trade with the (almost nonexistent) aid of your magician master. You'd better make some other friends!

Luckily for you, the designers at Origin have mixed many fictional universes in order to populate their new adventure game, *Tangled Tales*. You will soon team up with a werewolf, a radical surfer dude, a snowman, Goldilocks (a thief with a Valley accent), and Isaac Newton (who likes apples). Whoever created this universe of characters knew one important game-design fact: Make it fun and silly. Just meeting these strange personalities is enjoyable. Finding out how each follower and item can help you reach wizard status makes this one of the most enjoyable old-style adventure games ever created.

While the game plays like a classic adventure game, the user interface is entirely new. You will almost never have to type any words or phrases in order to play the game. Instead, you will see a vivid graphic interface. The screen is divided into several areas: One displays your view of the world, one shows a bird's-eye view

of your position, one contains the function icons, and one is a small text-information area. At any given time, you can select a function to move, talk, cast a spell (an ever-growing list is at your disposal), get or drop an item, and so on. While this limited vocabulary would seem to limit the game, this is not the case. Many of the functions (such as Talk and Action) are really entry points to a large range of possibilities. Just because a person will talk about some things in one spot does not mean he won't give you more information at another one.

The game has it faults. Sometimes the cursor keys are used to move the character figure physically around his world. Other times, the same keys are used to select the functions he performs. The space bar is used to switch between these two modes. This can cause many false moves when the player forgets which mode he is in. On top of that, there are too many functions to be displayed graphically at the same time. One of the icons flips between two sets of function icons. This can make even the most agile game player frustrated. As you get better at the game, you will start to use the keyboard shortcut keys in order to skip this confusion!

The game consists of three separate scenarios. Each must be completed before going on to the next, but you can always go back to an old area in case you missed something (and you will!). Of course, each area has its own new followers and objects. Some items move from one area to another (in some cases, this is required to win), but no followers move with you. Do not be afraid to die in this game: Your master will resurrect you with all your followers and items, but he will take your gold. This will be a good chance to rest and restore your magic points, which are vital to your spell-casting.

The game is very well packaged with colorful artwork (the picture of the knight, elf, and surfer dude is a classic) and an excellent manual. There is also a booklet included with the software that gives a little of your recent history; it makes for cute reading—something about a giant squirrel and some lost adamantite dust. This story has no effect on game play, but it gives you a nice taste of the game world.

Like all adventure games, this one has very little replay value. However, the size of this game (two double-sided disks) and the variety of the game universe will give more than adequate fun for the money. This game will probably not win awards for innovation in game play, but it should win one for showing how a good old-fashion adventure game should play. The best testimony to this game is the simple fact that it is the first adventure game in years that these game reviewers played from beginning to end. There was always new silliness around the next plot twist.—*reviewed by Patricia and Steve Sheets*

## Clue corner

### Curse of the Azure Bonds (SSI)

1. In the tower, the second dark elf lord is an illusion.

2. When you defeat the Red Wizard, you will find a robe. This is a cursed Robe of Powerlessness. It bestows you with a strength and intelligence of 3.

3. By the way, elves can be raised—try for yourself!

Joe Majsterski  
Webster TX

1. When fighting Sandroc, discretion is the better part of valor. At the start of the fight, move all of your characters into the northernmost room. Position all of your fighters in a line on the northern side of the entry way that leads into that room. This way, they'll never have to fight more than two efreet or drow, and the only spell Sandroc has that can reach them is Magic Missile. When all his minions are down, sneak up on Sandroc. Hide behind whatever obstacles are available (if you can't Aim at him, he can't Aim at you!), then rush out a few fighters and hack him to bits.

2. Yes, you *can* defeat the Mulmaster Beholder Corps under Dagger Falls using the Dust of Disappearance. No, the game can't handle this victory. I spent hours tediously hacking up drow lords, beholders, drow clerics, and rakshasas, only to be told there was some error or another in the program. I was frozen out of the game. I adventured on the PC/MS-DOS version.

Graham Horwood  
Huntsville TX

1. When finally faced with Tyranthraxus' Temple, you actually have time to learn one spell. This is directly before the bonds wake you up.

2. Once fully equipped, face Tyranthraxus by running away! Use Haste potions/spells and run like heck down the corridor into the next room. Fill the door and surrounding area with Stinking Clouds. Flank the door with your characters. Then you can pick off the enemy one by one, starting with the faster-moving priests, while staying clear of almost all spells.

Craig Naples  
White Oriels, Chaddleworth, Newbury,  
Berkshire, United Kingdom

1. After the first fight with the clerics of Moander and their shambling mound friends in the pit of Moander, you will be immediately confronted by three "Bits O' Meander." These critters are pretty tough; before they reach the party, have a few of your mages cast Stinking Clouds ahead of your front line. When I played, the Stinking Clouds rendered two of the garbage

heaps helpless, and they were quickly disposed of by Alias' and Dragonbait's missiles. Use your Wand of Defoliation on the third and hack at it with your toughest fighters, and the battle should be won.

2. In the Sewers of Tilverton, when you enter the room with the ottyughs and you see a glint of steel, flee and then reenter immediately. The monsters will be gone. If you bargain with the creatures, you find yourself searching everywhere for their cousins and for only a set of *chain mail* +1. Fighting them will almost surely kill your entire party.

3. Before reaching the last checkpoint in the Fire Knives' hideout, enter the door on your left. Open the metal box and take everything except the bracers—they're cursed!

4. In the Tower of Dracandros, after defeating Dracandros' bodyguards on the roof, rest and use your Dust of Disappearance. Then proceed downstairs. You will be confronted by a drow guard. Flee from the area. The dust will permit you to leave without sustaining any damage. Fighting the drow will result in at least four of your party members being killed.

5. When you reach the door that challenges you to send one of your characters in and duel a mage, send a paladin or ranger. Every time I sent my highest-level mage in, he was annihilated.

6. In the final battle with Tyranthraxus, have a couple of your second-line characters throw Javelins of Lightning at Tyranthraxus; they work very nicely!

Marc Webber  
Belleville, Ontario

The following trick not only works with *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, but also with *Pool of Radiance*:

At the start of the game, before your party starts adventuring on a currently saved game, remove all the characters from the party and turn off your computer. Then, turn on the computer and start the game again. Add all of your characters to the party and start adventuring. My party started at the point when they woke up with the sigils in Tilverton or when they entered Phlan from the dock. My party members retained their experience, equipment, hit points, and so on, and were able to play the game all over again. The party was able to multiply its magical items and experience. This trick was especially useful when my party was unable to win a section of the game and a few additional levels were needed.

David Johnson  
Apple Valley CA

NOTE: The Lessers have moved. Their new address is: 521 Czerny Drive, Tracy CA 95376, U.S.A. Send all correspondence to their new address.



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# The Game Wizards

So you say there aren't enough players out there, eh?

by Timothy B. Brown

Look back through the issues of DRAGON® Magazine and read the "Letters" and "Editorial" departments. You'll find the same complaint popping up time and time again: We need more players! Reflect on your own experience. How many times have you asked your few players to run more than one character simply because there weren't enough people to play? How often have you wished there was another gaming group in your area that you could join occasionally for a change of pace? Having a few more players around would be nice.

Of course, as role-playing gamers, we all know what a pain it can be trying to convince new people to join in the fun. It's easy enough to cultivate genuine interest in newcomers—the basic concept of RPGs and the topics they cover appeal to a lot of different people. But it's a gigantic leap from interest to participation when the poor newcomer wades into the mountain of books we take for granted. Once the seeds of interest are sown, they're easily washed away by the impending flood of rules, diagrams, and tables.

Let's face it. The way most role-playing games are written and presented now, you have to be absolutely in love with the idea of playing them when you buy them. Otherwise, the 200+ page rulebook ends up on the shelf with your other collectibles, forgotten and ready to gather dust.

Is there no hope? Can nothing be done to smooth the way for new players and Dungeon Masters?

We're convinced there is. The move from interest to participation shouldn't be a chore, it should be a pleasure!

Check out the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, now subtitled "An Easy-To-Learn Introduction To Role-Playing," coming out in April. It's now more than a game—it's a learning tool. Troy Denning, myself, and others here at TSR took a step back from traditional game design and presentation and asked a few simple questions: How do people learn? And, more importantly, how do they learn quickly and retain information longer? Not surprisingly, we found these questions have already been answered in the education field. So, we borrowed some concepts from professional educators.

Looking at the guts of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, it might not be readily apparent that this is all that new an approach. There is a 64-page book of rules, a large map, scads of stand-up cardboard heroes and monsters, dice, and a referee's screen—all pretty standard fare for boxed RPGs. What sets this game apart, however, is the Dragon Card Learning Pack.

The Learning Pack is the core of the system that allows a newcomer to explore the game in easy, manageable pieces. The front of each card deals with a single concept of the game. The back of the card has a programmed, solo adventure that uses that particular concept. So, the newcomer reads about one concept and then immediately experiences its application in a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game session.

The cards build upon one another when taken in order, so the newcomer progresses in small, simple steps. The headers on the cards are phrased as questions, so the newcomer always knows what he's supposed to be learning as he reads. This approach is used to enhance the reader's retention and to reinforce his comprehension.

The cards in the Learning Pack progressively teach the entire game system, from basic concepts to details of play. At four points in the Learning Pack, the reader has made sufficient progress to bring in a few friends as players—he's ready to be a Dungeon Master. For each of these four milestones in the learning process, there is a four-page adventure already prepared and ready for immediate play. The first four-page adventure deals with relatively simple game mechanics. The last encompasses everything the newcomer has learned, which, by that point, is the entire game system. The

newcomer has learned the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Game both easily and quickly, and he didn't need anyone to teach him the rules.

One word of warning. This is not a new edition of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Basic Set. There are no new rules here, except that characters may progress to fifth level. The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Rules Cyclopedia coming out in October will be packed with new rules, optional rules, skills, an atlas of the D&D world, and more; even if you already play D&D, the Rules Cyclopedia will no doubt tantalize you. But, if you already know how to play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, there is nothing new in this boxed set for you aside from the terrific new DM's screen. The Dragon Card Learning Pack, while interesting, won't expand your horizons one bit. . . .

Or will it?

It's a learning tool, available to you anytime you need it. Sure, you already know the rules, but what about expanding the pool of players in your area? If you hand the Dragon Card Learning Pack to that mildly interested friend, you've got a very good chance of gaining a new player. He'll make that leap from interest to participation all on his own. He may even remember the rules better than you do!

The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game is extremely simple. It deals with lower-level characters in dungeon adventure settings, period. But once you get someone playing it, they'll have all the knowledge they need to add anything they like. The Rules Cyclopedia will be a logical next step, taking them to higher levels of power and into the wonderful expanses of the D&D Known World. They can even take what they've learned about RPGs and how they're played and explore entirely new games like the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, the BUCK ROGERS® XXVc™ game, and others!

Complain no longer. The tool has arrived to eradicate non-role-playingism in our lifetimes. Use it, encourage others to use it, and prepare for new problems—like just how many different game groups can you play in every week!





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# The VOYAGE of the PRINCESS ARK

## Part 13: Where dreams of chaos reign

by Bruce A. Heard

*This series chronicles the adventures of an Alphatian explorer and his crew as they journey across the D&D® Known World in their skyship. The information herein may be used to expand D&D campaigns using the Gazetteer series.*

from the Journals of  
prince haldemar of haaken  
Lord Admiral of the Mightiest Empire  
Captain of the Ever-Victorious  
princess ark  
Imperial Explorer, etc., etc.

**Vertmir 11,2000 AY:** Many days and nights have passed since I began studying the ancient Thothian papyruses from King Haptuthep's tomb. One of them appears to be the missing fragment of my original scroll. As I grow closer to unveiling the key to the Thothian enchantment, my curiosity grows even greater, keeping my weariness at bay. The warm summer breeze plays with the flickering flames on the candelabrum, causing the tiny hieroglyphs to dance on the papyrus.

It is as though an uncanny life animates the symbols, telling strange stories of dark secrets, obscure magicks, and bizarre creatures invoked during the encryption.

Increasingly fascinated, I cannot truly discern where the reality of the pictograms ends and where the dancing illusions begin. Oddly, the symbols seem far away one instant, then inexplicably grow huge and very close the next—back and forth. Today as I was reading, my vision slowly blurred and my mind began to tip into an abyss of uncontrollable thoughts.

"Haaken-San?" The sudden voice rippled through my mind like the crack of a whip. I promptly jumped up, sending a flurry of notes flying off my desk and startling Myojo just as much. Dear Myojo—he hadn't seen me for days. He came to check on my well-being and in so doing saved me from complete insanity. It was clear that dire magicks protect this archaic Thothian papyrus—and I had almost been their victim. It had been far too long since I had some rest. It was time to put the papyrus away.

But a long sleep fraught with odious dreams and nightmares followed.

**Vertmir 13:** The deep sound of a distant gong awoke me. From the light filtering in, I could tell it was close to noon. I'd slept far later than I had wanted. I could hear the brief orders Xerdon barked to the crew while they clewed the sails up.

Despite a throbbing headache, I came up to the railing but left Xerdon in charge of the approach. We had reached our next stop at the far western tip of Ochalea. The small port of Tang-Hwa had an old custom of ringing huge gongs and blowing enormous horns both to greet incoming vessels and as a means of calling the guards to their positions, just in case. This noise served only to worsen my headache.

Down below, a crowd of cackling on-lookers gathered at the docks, pointing fingers up at the *Princess* with wide eyes. Skyships were not a common sight in these parts. Very soon came a dignitary, a Lady Ping, mounted on an elaborate palan-









quin. Talasar went down to greet her and bring her aboard the *Princess* for a visit of courtesy.

I invited Lady Ping to the officer's mess for a refreshment. The conversation was quite pleasant, except for some oddities. As we were talking, an ant came out of Lady Ping's nose, scurried over her face, then disappeared into her mouth. Xerdon and Talasar were also present but did not react, and neither did Lady Ping. Shortly afterward, the serpent tattoos on her face coiled and uncoiled. Nobody reacted to this, either. Talasar took Lady Ping for a tour of the *Princess*, and I took the opportunity to question Xerdon about the dignitary's facial tattoos. His answer of, "Tattoos, sir?" confused me even further. I retired to my quarters with an aggravating migraine.

**Vertmir 15:** The *Princess* remained two days above Tang-Hwa. Some of the crew went on leave while fresh supplies where carried in. I was ill during that time and delegated command of the *Princess* to Talasar. I've had several more nightmares that have perturbed my psyche, and I therefore prefer to stay away from the busy decks. Finally, our westward journey resumed with no further incident.

**Vertmir 16:** Today I felt much better and came up to the deck. My crew was relieved to see me there. My headache was gone, and I was no longer experiencing these upsetting nightmares. Everything was fine. The morning sun rose from the west, and purple clouds stretched along the horizon as fine gossamer, reaching toward the endless scarlet waves of the sea. I resumed command and ordered the *Imperial Ark* on a southward course across the emerald sky. Our heavy, bronze-clad man-of-war veered gracefully as its six wings fluttered in the late summer breeze. A flock of sapphire gulls glided in our wake, indolently waving their scaly tails. A lovely dawn indeed.

**Vertmir 28:** Days have past-very ordinary, fine days, I might add. We finally reached our next stop, on the northern coast of Davania, west of the Thyatian Jungle Coast. There had been rumors that a kingdom existed in this region. We expected to find coastal towns and ports, but instead the coast was almost entirely savage, overgrown with slender coconut trees and gnarled mangroves.

It was only because I used my spyglass that I spotted buildings in the upland hills. Vegetation partially concealed them. Most of the buildings had a dark green color, helping in their concealment, I could observe common activity taking place in the streets. I commanded the mighty *Imperial Ark* to be cloaked and sail forth.

**Tslamir 1:** We spent a day above these new-found people. Indeed, these are of a strange kind. These very tall, skinny people have pale green skin and long silver hair. Aside from this, it seems like a normal city and they did not seem a violent people. It was time to send down an away team.

Talasar will stay on board, while Xerdon, Myojo, and myself will go down to explore the place in more detail. We will descend into the forest and approach the town as travelers.

**Tslamir 2:** My adventures this day have been difficult to recount, for reasons that shall grow clear, and this entry and those following it have been written some days after they occurred. I shall start at the beginning:

The green people reacted with great curiosity when we entered the front gate. There was no sign of animosity. Soon enough, an official came forward with a small guard. The guards wore very elaborate armor, with graceful curves and sharp thorns perhaps designed to both decorate and defend. I could not tell what the armor was made of; it wasn't metal, however. The blades of their weapons were similarly shaped.

The official came closer and inquired about our origins. It appeared they had already met Thyatian explorers a decade ago. The odd thing is that I could understand the official quite clearly, but Xerdon and Myojo could not. The official, Lord Verdlin, invited us to his residence, and we followed.

It was indeed quite a residence. The mansion was almost entirely built of wood, intricately carved and dyed in various tones of green, the dominant color here. It had an incredible garden with beautiful topiary, shrubs, and trees. The inside of the building had a more natural wood color, except for the very fine carpet of grass growing inside—comfortable, but uncommon. We sat next to a small fountain with Lord Verdlin and his wife, Lady Gruneel. She had her servants bring *un-rah*, the local brew—a sweet, fermented tree sap of which we all partook.

We had a long conversation. The name of the city is Glauqnor; it belongs to the small kingdom of Emerond. The capital lies further inland. The Emerondians' skin color comes from vegetable dyes. They developed a civilization and culture based on the respect and love of nature, especially flora, and grew to understand all aspects of plant life and the magic devoted to that sphere. They live mostly on vegetables that they grow in small fields or pick from the forest. The Emerondians seemed like a very peaceful people.

As a sign of courtesy, Lord Verdlin invited our party to be his guests at the residence for the night. I accepted, and shortly afterward was led to my quarters. We spent the evening with a group of young nobles eager to show off the best parts of their city. Gardens and ornamental plants were ever present in the streets and on the houses. When I grew tired of the tour, one of the nobles proposed a stop at an "elation abode." Having no idea what that was, I decided to go along.

The place was an indoor pool and sauna. A few nobles of both genders were already there, naked, waving at me while

enjoying the hot, bubbling water. Myojo came out of the dressing room in the briefest of attires but still holding his sword. He looked down at the water, gazed at me in despair, then resigned himself to stepping down into the bath. He sat there, quite unhappy, as two cute courtesans delighted in scrubbing his head and scratching his chin. Xerdon came out next, clutching at a small towel, visibly embarrassed. I could have sworn one of the young nobles winked at him, but I could be mistaken. I couldn't tell if it was the hot water that caused Xerdon to blush.

Things got a bit less uptight as I discovered the water was laced with *unrah*. It was indeed a very pleasant interlude, until I noticed something strange. The cheeks of my closest neighbor, Lady Gruneel, began to stretch unnaturally until green thorns ripped through her skin. She opened her mouth to say something, but her tongue was turning into a slimy liana. It coiled out and lunged at me. In horror I jumped back and slapped at the obscene thing.

The entire scene suddenly changed. To my astonishment, I found myself standing next to the small fountain at Lord Verdlin's residence. At my feet lay a dazed Lady Gruneel, rubbing her cheek. I could see the mark of a hand slap on her face. Myojo sat nearby, staring at me with wide eyes, while Xerdon slowly shook his head, looking at me with surprise and shock. It was as if nothing had actually happened since we had sat down for our fountain-side conversation!

Lord Verdlin leaped to his feet. "This is an outrage!" he roared. Guards raced into the room. I wasn't granted time to explain my deed—I couldn't anyway. The offended lord had me taken to his prison.

**Tslamir 3** (I think): Had I been dreaming? Was I losing my mind? I started to suspect the ancient Thothian papyrus had affected me far more than I thought. I could no longer rely on my senses. With horror, I also realized I could not recall any spells; my thoughts and memories blurred every time I tried. I was wholly powerless.

The cell was dark, humid, and absolutely silent, yet at times I could hear voices. One sounded like King Haptuthep, another like Herr Rolf or Synn, and Lord Verdlin's cry of outrage echoed continually in my mind. The walls began to warp, turning into black, glossy sludge. With great difficulty, I shrugged the vision off, and calm returned for a while. I knew enough then to realize I was hallucinating. But I could not remain clear headed much longer.

Soon enough, my delusions returned along with a throbbing headache. Creatures of chaos marched all through my cell, roaring and screeching horribly. The infernal procession went on for what seemed an eternity, mimicking the uncanny ballet of hieroglyphs on the archaic papyrus. In the profound psychosis that overtook my mind, I discovered what I had been after. It was there, the key to the

Thothian enchantment.

Oh, I wasn't truly mad. What I had failed to understand is that one must become a Gate to Chaos in order to use the powers of the Thothian enchantment. I had merely become a gate standing at the threshold of my world and of the Plane of Nightmares. I could see both at once; my world and the nightmare plane had seemed to be the same all along. The oddities that had occurred were chaotic emanations from the Plane of Nightmares of which only I was aware. Alas, this discovery did not grant me control over the visions. I still could not trust my senses.

The long, insane night went on.

**Tslamir 4:** The guard pulled me out of the jail this day and brought me to Lord Verdlin. Xerdon and Myojo were present under a solid guard, along with magistrates and scribes. I was informed that the penalty for my deed was death. But in view of the fact I was an important personality, I would be granted the right to something called "Trial by Fear."

I was dragged to a large wooden structure that looked like an indoor arena. The magistrates took places at a bench, while a number of nobles sat around a wide pit. The guards then lowered me into the pit, and a large iron grate squeaked open. A horrid miasma befouled the air in the pit, while creatures from chaos spewed out of the dark.

I couldn't be sure this was truly happening. Was I dreaming all this? If not, there was little I could do. Frustrated, I made a terrible effort to shut the gate myself. With a thundering crash, the iron grate slammed shut, and the visions blurred into oblivion—except for one. It stood tall and slimy, and it was snapping its mandibles at me. I could see the many marks on its shell left by fallen warriors. And I was unarmed. Powerless.

Against a fragment of a dream.

In anger, I faced the nightmarish phantasm and addressed it formally. "Creature of the Dark, thou canst not harm me, for I know whence thou hast come! I fear thee not. Begone!" Strengthened by my words, I turned away from the thing, looked up at Lord Verdlin, and added, "Let this charade come to its end. This has lasted far too long!" Lord Verdlin blinked at me, then gazed at the chief magistrate, who responded with a short nod. The guards lifted me out. The request was made that I leave with my two companions and never return. I supposed that was fair enough and proceeded back to the forest at once.

**Tslamir 5:** I briefed Xerdon, Myojo, and Talasar of what had happened and why. It was imperative that I return to my quarters at once and complete the Thothian enchantment. This would be the only way of defeating the spells madness. I ordered I was not to be interrupted for any reason. Talasar will therefore assume command of the ship until my return.

On the way down to my quarters, Myojo mentioned how impressed he was

by my inconceivable bravery and gall in the face of the terrible Emerondian monster in the pit. Confused, I stopped in my tracks and considered the implications of his comments. "What monster, Myojo? You saw it?"

Perplexed, he said, "Well, yes, Haaken-san. You ignored the beast and turned away as if you could not care less. The monster was so surprised that it backed off. Clearly, it sensed you to be a powerful wizard." At the expression on my face, Myojo queried further, "Is something wrong, Haaken-San?"

"Never mind, Myojo. Thanks, anyway." *To be continued...*

If you have any comments regarding this column or the D&D game's Known World as designed in the *Gazetteers*, please send your inquiries to: Bruce A. Heard, D&D Column, TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. We cannot guarantee that all letters will get answers, but they always get our attention.

### The Emerondians

The Kingdom of Emerond is a loosely organized nation of city-states under one monarch. Over the centuries, a nobility has developed from the more influential families of the city-states' governments. The city-states are mostly autonomous, but, in case of war or a grave crisis, they will accept the rulership of the ancestral ruling dynasty. In other times, the city-states see the royal authority mostly as a honorific position.

The Emerondians are essentially farmers and gatherers. Their knowledge of agriculture and flora in general is extensive, but they remain almost totally ignorant about the ways of the sea and navigation. The local economy is weak compared to other nations of the Known World, as their concept of private property is rather vague. Emerondians share with each other much more than money-driven societies. They live a humble, albeit generally comfortable, life.

A peaceful people, the Emerondians are very respectful of their ancestors and laws. They benefit from an ancient culture that provides them with a rich artistic and literary background. Their philosophy is mostly druidical, but several insectlike figures are known to be part of the Emerondian pantheon of Immortal patrons.

They suffered several invasions in the past, including a number of limited incursions from Thyatis. Emerondians maintain a small but reasonably well-trained army. They are masters at concealment in woods and have acquired a great experience in engineering. As a result, their cities are always fortified and well defended.

Emerondians grow a special steel-like vegetable fiber from which they produce armor or blades. Amply curved lines and deadly thorns are typical of these pieces of equipment. The color of the fibers varies

from tan to dark brown. A common sort of Emerondian armor provides AC 5 (AC 4 with a shield), while blades are equivalent to the Known World's normal swords. Both types of equipment generate half the encumbrance of comparable metal weapons for the same strength. If ever sold, they would cost five times the price of metal gear because of the time needed to grow the fibers and the amount of work needed to fashion them.

Emerondians have mastered a special fighting technique that makes ample use of the thorns on their armor and on their blades. Once during each round of melee, one of the following may happen, depending on the Emerondian warrior's initial attack roll that round:

—On an attack score of 1-5, an opponent chosen at random is stabbed by a thorn inflicting 1-4 hp damage.

—On an attack score of 16-20, an opponent of the Emerondian warrior's choice must make a Strength check or be disarmed.

The Emerondians are not natives of the Known World. They came many centuries ago from asteroids far beyond the Sky shield, called the Pyrithean Archipelago. The Pyritheans were a race of savage space pirates. A stray war band became stranded on the Known World and eventually founded the more peaceful Emerond Kingdom. They brought their unique vegetable fiber with them.

The common Emerondians have forgotten about this old tie with their warlike Pyrithean ancestors. A handful of the high priests and greater druids remain as the keepers of this archaic lore. They have a secret knowledge of special magic that creates Pyrithean war mounts: flying insects grown to huge proportions and transformed into mystical armored beasts with wicked thorns and talons. The war mounts are tamed to respond to their riders' thoughts. For combat purposes, the mounts have the same game statistics as the hook horror (AC9 *Creature Catalog*, page 70), but have a flying movement of 180' (60').

### Letters

Hooray! The HOLLOW WORLD™ boxed set added essential information on the Immortals' interaction with the mortals and their goals in the Known World. They are much more active than I first thought.

Unfortunately, you left a number Immortals out—some with good reason, but others would have been useful. My second complaint is that the chapter on Immortals explains only briefly how they interact with their clerics and worshippers. The most important question is: How closely do Immortals monitor their clerics? After all, it appears Immortals are not omniscient. Since an Immortal patron provides a cleric with spells, dreams, and omens, it would be logical to assume the Immortal is aware of the cleric's identity and personality.



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### Highlights include:

- A dozen new mutant animals.
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However, candidates to immortality have to go to a lot of trouble to get the attention of an Immortal sponsor. It would seem that a cleric who has served his Immortal patron faithfully should not have this problem. How do you handle it?

*HOLLOW WORLD* set author Aaron Allston faced the daunting task of compiling these Immortal characters from the mass of previously published D&D modules and accessories within a relatively short time. That and the limited space in the *HOLLOW WORLD* Sourcebook are what governed which Immortals made it to print.

If current plans hold together, there should be an update of the *Immortals Set* coming in 1992. The material that Aaron put together (including what was left out) will be expanded even further, and many of the finer points on game mechanics and role-playing will be fine-tuned at that time. As a matter of fact, now would be a good time to send in your suggestions on what you would like to see removed or improved in that game set.

Part of the problem with Immortals comes from the fact that the original creators of the D&D game wanted to downplay the importance of gods and religions in role-playing in order to avoid offending anyone. Unfortunately, it did take out quite a bit of color from role-playing clerics. Originally, clerics furthered a general philosophy of Law, Neutrality, or Chaos without being connected to any specific Immortal.

Over years of product development, that concept was slowly replaced with the more popular idea of Immortal patrons interacting with clerics. Unfortunately, the current game system is not built to handle this situation to its best effect. Until an update of the *Immortal Set* comes out, we'll have to tinker with the system a bit.

In the case of clerical candidates to immortality, assume Immortals will treat them no better than any other character class. When it comes to who is best suited to become an Immortal, there can be no distinction of classes. What is relevant is what the candidate accomplishes in the Known World, not how much faith he has in his Immortal patron. Also bear in mind that there is a certain question of game balance and fairness here.

How do the Churches of Karameikos, Traladara, the Eternal Truth, and the People's Temple relate to the Immortals? What Immortals have the Ylari adopted as their philosophical guides besides Protius?

The Church of Karameikos is of a polytheist cult. Its major patron is Asterius, with some representation of Vanya, Valerias, Tarastia, Kagyar, and Ilsundal. A single church of Karameikos often has several chapels consecrated to some or all of the above Immortal patrons. Each Immortal requires a separate cleric for services, however. Only the larger churches of Karameikos have multiple clerics on a

permanent basis. The Church of Traladara is similar, although it follows exclusively the precepts of Halav, Petra, and Zirchev.

Note that the Church of Thyatis is a defunct organization that splintered in to smaller groups. Otherwise, it should be nearly identical to the Church of Karameikos.

The Eternal Truth goes by the Way of Al Kalim. It is more of a way of life than an actual religion. Al Kalim (an ex-follower of Protius) should be considered an Immortal. The Magian Fire Worshipers are followers of Rathanos. But the People's Temple? What's that?

The *HOLLOW WORLD* set seems to contradict some of the Gazetteers. For example, the *HOLLOW WORLD* set states that Rafael belongs to the Sphere of Time; GAZ13 says he belongs in the Sphere of Energy). The *HOLLOW WORLD* set says Atzanteotl attained greater Immortal power, while both GAZ10 and GAZ13 say he's only a screaming demon.

Rafael really ought to be part of the Sphere of Energy; hopefully a future correction will take care of that problem in the *HOLLOW WORLD* set. Atzanteotl had indeed attained Empyrean level by the time the *HOLLOW WORLD* set made it to print.

1. Do pegataurs have infravision, immunity to ghoulish paralysis, and the ability to detect secret doors?
2. At which level(s) do pegataurs gain a new weapon proficiency?
3. Do centaurs begin with skilled mastery with the longbow?
4. Is the gestation period of the elves the same as shadow elves' 12 months?
5. Is the level advancement of Tree Keepers the same as for shadow elves?
6. Where did the Myoshiman rakastas get their spell-casting abilities?
7. What would a rakasta's level-advancement table be like?
8. The Immortals Set states that a Hierarch is nearly omnipotent on its own plane when dealing with a lesser Immortal. What about mortals?

There are gamers out there who relish this kind of rules detail. The D&D game provides general ideas and guidelines for gaming. For the sake of flexibility and simplicity, game rules often avoid going into massive lists of what monsters can and cannot do. If you run into a problem of this nature, the choice is yours — and your DMs — to make, depending on how you want your game to be played. If you feel the need to have a rule dictated to you for everything, perhaps you are better off playing the AD&D® game. But if we must:

1. Infravision only.
2. AC9 Creature Catalog mentions a 20% chance per level; this guarantees one new mastery per five levels.
3. If you so desire.
4. Yes.
5. Yes.

6. That was an optional twist to the rules that I brought in for the purpose of the story. Assume some rakasta tribes to be more skillful than others at wizard or clerical magic.
7. GAZ9 The Orcs of Thar suggested a generic system for developing new character classes based on monsters.
8. Mortals, to a Hierarch on his home plane, are the same as food for Fido.

What happened to Blackmoor? Who caused its doom?

Humans experimenting with magic and forbidden technologies caused a nuclear explosion that destroyed Blackmoor.

How do I volunteer in designing a map or game background for the Moon of Myoshima?

A short article with a few maps submitted to *DRAGON®* Magazine might be the way to start. There are *Writers Guidelines* available from *DRAGON* Magazine that you'll need to get first, however. Send a SASE to: *Writers Guidelines*, *DRAGON* Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. [You should also query the editors to make sure they want to see your article before you write it. —The Editors]

What happened to AC4 *The Book of Marvelous Magic*?

It has been out of print for a number of years and is now a collector's item. You might be able to get a copy at the annual GEN CON® games fair auction.

The Legion of Thar described in GAZ10 is way too small to live up to its reputation. With 30,000 humanoids, it could not take Corunglain, let alone fight a major war against humans and demihumans. Is this number correct?

It is by AC 1000 standards. Remember two things: First, humanoids breed a lot faster than humans or demihumans do; second, humanoids view the Broken Lands as their sacred territory, and any rumor of war is likely to attract masses of humanoids from the Dwarfgate Mountains to the Kurish Massif. A 300,000-strong horde of starving (there's not enough food in the Broken Lands for that big an army) and angry humanoids may very well do the trick.

Ω

## Errata

Two glitches sneaked into Haldemar's personality description (second paragraph) in *DRAGON* issue #164, page 44. In truth, Haldemar refrains from any of his dressing excesses away from the court. And while Haldemar enjoys sneaking about as a thief, he does not have the ability to move silently as a thief.



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# DINO WARS!

The U.S. Army meets the dinosaurs—and the fight is on!

©1991 by Tom Moldvay

Pvt. Bill Smith crouched behind a boulder—not that the rock offered much protection from dinosaurs. But old habits die hard, and a soldier is trained to seek cover. Out in the mists, he heard the great beasts roaring. Bill took a deep breath and double checked his loads. It wouldn't be long now.

The roaring grew nearer, and the ground shook. Bill wished he'd signed up for the tank corps. At least tankers had some protection.

The mist parted and a horror emerged. It was an Allosaurus, as high as a second-floor window and as long as a house. Its brownish-gray skin glistened in the misty light. But all Bill had eyes for were its daggerlike claws and gaping mouth, filled with teeth that could rip a man in half.

The rest of Bill's squad spotted the dinosaur and opened up. Sharp rifle cracks filled the air. Off to his right, the staccato sputtering of the squads machine gun could be heard. Bill didn't bother to aim. He just pointed his rifle and fired. The Allosaurus was so big you couldn't miss. The problem was hitting a vital area. The beast didn't have any. Only massed fire would bring it down—if they were lucky.

They weren't.

The Allosaurus lumbered right through the hail of gunfire, which merely made it angrier, and smashed into the skirmish

line a dozen yards to Bill's left. Bill heard a crunching sound, then a horrible scream that ended in the gurgling cry of "Mother!" It sounded like PFC Sam Moran, but the screaming was so different from Sam's normal voice that Bill couldn't be sure.

"You dirty lizard! You killed Sam! Eat lead, lizard spawn!" The shouting was from Sergeant Savage, who had been in line next to Sam. Cradling a Tommy gun in his meaty hands, the sergeant leapt from cover and ran straight for the Allosaurus, firing burst after burst until his weapon was empty. The bullets stitched into the monster, which bellowed in rage and pain.

Sergeant Savage ripped a hand grenade from his belt. Pulling the pin with his teeth, he lobbed the grenade at the dinosaur's head. Then he dove to earth.

The explosion ripped into the Allosaurus, blowing apart its jaw and half its neck. The dinosaur took one hesitant step forward—then it toppled. The earth shook with the impact of its fall.

A ragged cheer rang out from the squad. The Allosaurus was dead. They were still alive. But they had little time for celebrating. Out in the mists, Bill could already hear yet another wave of dinosaurs massing for the attack.

DINO WARS! is a set of miniatures rules that simulates combat between dinosaurs and Army men. The emphasis is on fictional combat as it appears in grade-B science-fiction movies and novels. The result is a set of rules that are easy to learn, with play that is both fun and fast.

All that's required for a game of DINO WARS! are these rules, some miniature soldiers and dinosaurs (cheap, colorful, plastic ones are best), a ruler or yardstick, and two six-sided dice. Two players are required (one for the Army and one for the dinosaurs), although more can be added (to run several squads of soldiers or groups of dinosaurs).

DINO WARS! is broken down into game turns. Each game turn has five phases which must be completed in order. The game continues until one side is completely eliminated or one side fulfills its mission.

## Sequence of play

1. Dinosaur Movement Phase
  - a. Closing fire
  - b. Overrun attacks
2. Regular Fire Phase
3. Dinosaur Attack Phase
4. Army Movement Phase
5. Secondary Fire Phase





## 1. Dinosaur Movement Phase

All dinosaurs may move during this phase. Each dinosaur may move any distance to the limit allowed by its movement rate, given in scale inches on Table 1 (with modifiers from Table 2, as appropriate). Flying movement is measured specially, with both horizontal and vertical factors counted together for a total movement rate (for example, a Pterodactyl moving 12" upward and 24" forward has moved 36" total). If a dinosaur makes overrun attacks (see "Closing fire and overrun attacks"), there is a 2" movement penalty per overrun attack. If the optional rules are being used, there is also a 2" penalty for any unusual terrain (see "Optional Rules: Terrain Penalties").

**Closing fire and overrun attacks:** The Dinosaur Movement Phase has two special subphases. If a dinosaur makes contact with a soldier or vehicle figure, and the monster decides to make an overrun attack (i.e., it decides to stamp on the Army figure), the defender gets a chance to shoot before the dinosaur can attack. Such shooting is called closing fire.

All hand weapons, except grenades, can be used during closing fire. A soldier firing a hand weapon in closing fire does not need to worry about line of sight; he can see the dinosaur perfectly well. All machine guns can also fire, but each requires a line of sight to do so (they're harder to move). Line of sight for a machine gun extends in a 180° arc to its front. Thus, a

machine gun nest taking an overrun attack from the rear will not get closing fire. Other weapons, such as a tank gun or a mortar, do not get closing fire.

A vehicle will get closing fire only if it has a machine gun mounted on it, and if the gun has a line of sight to the dinosaur. Only one closing-fire attack per figure can be made. A figure attacked by more than one dinosaur gets closing fire only on the first dinosaur to attack.

A dinosaur that makes contact with a soldier or a vehicle during movement may make an overrun attack, which slows the dinosaur down, subtracting 2" from its movement rate. If a dinosaur does not have at least 2" of movement left when it makes contact, an overrun attack cannot be made. (Note also that any dinosaur killed during closing fire is eliminated and gets no further attacks.)

Should the overrun attack succeed, and the soldier is killed or the vehicle destroyed, the dinosaur can continue movement. The dinosaur can keep moving and making overrun attacks as long as it has enough movement to pay the overrun cost, and as long as each overrun attack succeeds.

An overrun attack fails if the defender survives. The defender survives if the attacking dinosaur rolls a miss, if the dinosaur doesn't destroy a vehicle (see "Damage"), or if the soldier is a special figure who makes his luck roll (see "Special Army Figures" and "Damage").

If an overrun attack fails, the dinosaur ends its movement in contact with the defender, and play continues normally. The defender cannot make closing fire, but he may be able to fire again during the Regular Fire Phase. The dinosaur can attack again (providing it survives regular fire) during the Dinosaur Attack Phase.

The choice whether or not to make an overrun attack is up to the dinosaur player. He can always choose to stop movement for that dinosaur and not make an overrun attack. The dinosaur can still attack normally, however, just as the soldier can fire normally.

**Example:** A Tyrannosaurus, with a movement of 18", begins the turn 4" from a line of skirmishers. The Tyrannosaurus moves 4" to attack the closest soldier. The man fires but does not kill the monster. The Tyrannosaurus kills the soldier in an overrun, thus using up 2" more movement. The next soldier is 2" away. The dinosaur moves to him, survives closing fire, and kills the man in another overrun. The Tyrannosaurus has now spent 10" on movement (4" + 2" + 2" + 2"). There is a soldier only 1" away. The Tyrannosaurus moves to attack, once more survives closing fire, and kills its third victim in the turn, at the cost of 3" more movement points (1" movement + 2" attack cost). The fourth soldier in the skirmish line is 4" away. The Tyrannosaurus moves into contact, but does not have enough movement left for an overrun.

There is, therefore, no closing fire. The soldier can still shoot during the Regular Fire Phase, just as the Tyrannosaurus can attack during the Dinosaur Attack Phase.

## 2. Regular Fire Phase

Once all dinosaur movement has taken place, and all closing fire and overruns have been resolved, the Army side has the opportunity for regular fire. All weapons can be fired in this phase, provided they are within range of and have a line of sight to a dinosaur target. See Table 3 for weapons details; modifiers for attack rolls are on Table 4.

Some weapons shown on Table 3 can be fired twice in a turn. These are weapons that do not have to be reloaded each turn or require no special handling. Such weapons can be fired during the Regular Fire Phase and once more in the course of the turn. The other fire attack can come either during closing fire or in the Secondary Fire Phase (but not both). Some circumstances will prohibit firing more than once in a turn (e.g., if the soldier is acting as a spotter for artillery fire; see "Indirect fire").

**Example:** A Stegosaurus tries to overrun a soldier shooting a rifle. The man fires during closing fire and hits the Stegosaurus, but does not kill it. The Stegosaurus rolls too high on its overrun attack, so the soldier survives. During the Regular

Fire Phase he shoots again. His shot hits again, this time killing the Stegosaurus.

## 3. Dinosaur Attack Phase

Once the Army side has had a chance to fire all its weapons, every dinosaur in contact with a soldier or vehicle gets to make an attack. Only one attack per dinosaur can be made during the Dinosaur Attack Phase. There is no movement cost, since normal dinosaur attacks are not considered overruns.

## 4. Army Movement Phase

After every dinosaur in contact with a soldier or vehicle has had a chance to attack, all Army soldiers and vehicles are allowed to move. The movement rate for soldiers is 6"; the movement rate for vehicles is 18" (see Table 5; modifiers for Army movement values are on Table 6).

There is a special movement penalty for moving out of contact with a dinosaur. The penalty for a soldier is 2"; the penalty for a vehicle is 6". Thus, a soldier in contact with a dinosaur can move only 4" that turn; a vehicle in contact with a dinosaur has only 12" of movement left.

## 5. Secondary Fire Phase

Finally, after every Army soldier and vehicle has had a chance to move, any soldier using a weapon that gets two attacks per turn and has not already fired

twice gets a second shot.

**Example:** A Triceratops tries to charge a tank. However, after measuring movement, the dinosaur is still 3" away. During the Regular Fire Phase, the tank fires both its cannon and its machine gun. The Triceratops survives. The tank backs up 18" during the Army Movement Phase. In the Secondary Fire Phase, the tank's machine gun, but not its cannon, can fire again.

Once all secondary fire is over, the turn ends. A new turn begins with a new phase of dinosaur movement.

**Note:** The controlling player always has the choice of how figures move and attack. Thus, a player could move one dinosaur and make all its overrun attacks before moving the next dinosaur. Likewise, soldiers need not declare their targets ahead of time. They could fire at one dinosaur until they killed it, then switch to another target. The choice of the order of movement and fire is part of the strategy of the game.

## Attacks

Attacks are rolled using two six-sided dice (2d6). To succeed, the attack score or lower must be rolled. If the attack score is 8, a roll of 8 or lower indicates a successful attack, while a roll of 9 or higher indicates a failed attack. Attack scores are given in Table 1 for the dinosaurs and Table 3 for the Army (with modifiers for the latter in Table 4).

Note that several weapons on Table 3 have two values listed, divided by a slash. The first number given is the attack score for direct fire. The second number is the attack score for indirect fire. For example, heavy artillery has an attack value of 9/7. The 9 value would be used if the artillery piece had a direct line of sight to the target dinosaur. The 7 value would be used for indirect fire (i.e., if a spotter were calling down fire onto a target the artillery crew couldn't see directly).

Each Army soldier uses whatever weapon the playing figure has. In the World War II era, the basic weapon is a rifle. In the modern era, the basic weapon is an assault rifle. In addition, every soldier is considered to have an unlimited amount of hand grenades (in play, few soldiers get to throw more than two before they are eaten, and unlimited grenades reduces bookkeeping for all players).

## Special Army Figures

The Army side can have three kinds of special figures: NCOs, leaders, and heroes (everyone else is a regular enlisted man). NCOs are noncommissioned officers: corporals and sergeants. They will often be in charge of a fire team, section, or squad. Leaders are commissioned officers, usually lieutenants and captains. They are the platoon and company commanders. Heroes may be of any rank selected by the Army player.

Special figures should be chosen because





they stand out from the rest of the figures at a glance. NCOs, leaders, and heroes are considered to always have the standard weapon of their time, along with whatever secondary weapon the figure is actually armed with. Thus, even though the actual figure is firing a pistol, a leader will get to shoot with a rifle (if from the World War II period) or an assault rifle (if from the modern era). Sometimes NCOs or heroes have weapons that are better than the basic ones (e.g., automatic rifles).

Special figures always get a special +1 modifier to their attack scores. Thus, an NCO firing a submachine gun would have an attack score of 9 instead of 8.

In addition, special figures are allowed to make luck rolls if successfully attacked by dinosaurs (see "Damage"). Successful luck rolls allow these figures to escape death and can also stop overrun attacks.

As a general rule, one out of every 10 Army men can be a NCO. For every two NCOs, there can be one leader (usually a lieutenant or captain) and one hero (who could be of any rank). Thus a force of 22 men could include 18 enlisted men, two NCOs, one leader, and one hero.

## Crewed Weapons

Some large Army weapons require a crew in order to be fired effectively. The minimum crew values given on Table 3 are the number of soldier figures who must be designated as crew if this sort of weapon is to continue to fire each turn. If crew members fall below the minimum listed for such a weapon, a single individual can fire that weapon once only. Afterward, the weapon is considered unloaded and cannot be fired until the minimum number of crew spend one turn at the weapon without firing it (they are reloading it).

Weapon crews cannot fire their individual weapons in a turn if their crewed weapon has been or is about to be fired that turn. Thus, the Army player has a choice each turn of whether to fire the weapon or all the crew's weapons.

**Exception:** A crewed weapon can never be fired if a dinosaur is in contact with it. The individual crew members must fire instead.

Note that the +1 attack modifier for special figures does not apply to a crewed weapons attack if a special figure is part of a weapons crew. Thus, there is no advantage to having these figures join weapons crews.

If a dinosaur attacks a crewed weapon, the dinosaur player has the choice of attacking either the weapon itself or the crew. Any attack that succeeds against a crewed weapon destroys that weapon.

**Example:** A howitzer crew has been firing at an oncoming Allosaurus, which survives and keeps coming. The turn starts with the Allosaurus 7" away from the howitzer. The Allosaurus moves the 7" and decides to make an overrun attack on one of the crew. That individual alone is

allowed to fire his rifle during closing fire, but he misses the Allosaurus. The overrun succeeds. The Allosaurus has plenty of movement left and tries to overrun another crewman. The Allosaurus survives another closing-fire attack, but its own attack fails. The Allosaurus ends its move in contact with the last three crewmen and the howitzer. During the Regular Fire Phase, the three crewmen fire their rifles at the Allosaurus. Two hit, but the Allosaurus is not killed. The Allosaurus then destroys the howitzer with a successful attack. The surviving crewmen abandon the howitzer, moving 4" during the Army Movement Phase. Two of the three get secondary fire; the other crewman has no secondary fire because he got closing fire.

## Damage

If a dinosaur's attack succeeds against a regular enlisted soldier, that man is killed. Special Army figures have a chance to survive a dinosaur attack. On any successful dinosaur attack, a special figure gets a luck roll, shown on the following table:

Special figure	Luck roll
NCO	7
Leader	8
Hero	9

If the figure rolls his luck score or less on 2d6, the figure is only wounded and can continue to fight (wounding has no effect unless the optional "wounded men" rule is used). If the roll fails, the figure is killed. A special figure can be killed only by failing to make a luck roll. A hero hit by three dinosaurs must make three separate luck rolls; as long as the figure keeps making its luck rolls, it can fight on. A successful luck roll will end an overrun attack just as if the dinosaur attack had failed.

Damage to dinosaurs and vehicles is different than damage to soldiers. Most dinosaurs and vehicles can take multiple hits. Dinosaurs have life points (LP). Vehicles have structural points (SP). Both concepts function essentially the same.

Dinosaurs and Army weapons have damage values given on Tables 1 and 3, respectively. For dinosaurs, these damage values are used only when fighting Army vehicles. Ignore them when the dinosaur fights an individual soldier.

A dinosaur can continue to fight until it loses all its life points. A vehicle can continue to function until it loses all its structural points. Players must keep track of damage to dinosaurs and vehicles, either on a separate sheet of paper or on scraps of paper placed by the appropriate dinosaur or vehicle.

## Automatic Kill

Certain weapons are so powerful that they have a chance to automatically kill a dinosaur. Likewise, certain dinosaurs have a chance to automatically destroy a vehicle. It takes an especially lucky roll for an

"automatic kill." Army weapons with an asterisk after their damage value on Table 3 get an automatic kill if the player rolls a 2 on his attack dice.

Dinosaurs are a little more complicated. A dinosaur with a single asterisk after its damage value can destroy any vehicle, except a tank, on an attack roll of 2. Dinosaurs with two asterisks after their damage value can destroy a non-tank vehicle on an attack roll of 2 or 3, and can destroy a tank on an attack roll of 2. Note that a weapon or a dinosaur with no asterisk after its damage value can still harm a vehicle, but it can't kill it with one roll.

**Examples:** A platoon armed with rifles faces a Brachiosaurus. They must hit the creature with 32 successful shots before they can kill the 89-ton beast. On the other hand, a single hit from a bazooka could kill the dinosaur if the attack roll was a 2. Even if it wasn't a roll of 2, on a successful attack, the bazooka would do 3 LP damage instead of 1.

Likewise, a Pterodactyl would have hit a jeep three times to knock it out. A Monoclonius would take out a jeep on a single hit since it does 3 SP damage, but the Monoclonius would have to hit a tank five times to take it out. A Triceratops would also have to hit the tank five times to take it out normally, but it could get lucky and destroy the tank with one hit if it rolled a 2.

## Armor

Armor makes a figure harder to successfully attack in combat. Only dinosaurs have armor (the effects of the vehicles' armor were calculated into their structural points). The dinosaurs' armor value acts as a negative modifier to the Army attack roll. Thus, an Ankylosaurus (armor 2) would cause two points to be subtracted from all opponents' attacks, so a pistol (attack score 7) would penetrate the bony armor only on a roll of 2-5.

If a dinosaur's armor value is given in two numbers, divided by a slash, then the first number applies to all frontal attacks and the second applies to rear attacks. A dash means the dinosaur has no armor against a rear attack. Any attack within 180° of the front of the dinosaur figure is considered a frontal attack. If it is uncertain whether the attack is from the front or rear, give the dinosaur the benefit of the doubt.

## Transportation

The Army player may want to transport soldiers in or on their vehicles for faster movement. The carrying capacity for different vehicles is given on Table 5. This capacity is a range of numbers, since not all vehicles of the same type are of the same size. Use the minimum values for small vehicles, the average for medium-sized vehicles, and the maximum for the largest vehicles of any particular type. A player can generally gauge by eye what carrying capacity seems reasonable for any vehicle. If difficulties arise, see how

many figures can actually fit into or onto the vehicle without falling off.

Carrying capacity does not include the vehicle's crew, which includes the driver and men to work any weapons mounted on the vehicle. Crew capacities are given on Table 5, but these may vary depending on the type of weapons mounted on the vehicle. Basically, every vehicle has a driver. If the vehicle has a mounted machine gun, there will be one additional crewman (i.e., two crewmen total). If the vehicle has a mounted cannon, there will be two additional crewmen (three total). If the vehicle has both a machine gun and a cannon, there will be three extra crewmen (four total).

**Example:** The Army player has a halftrack that can carry six soldiers. If the halftrack had a mounted machine gun, its carrying capacity would be reduced by one. If the halftrack had a mounted cannon, its carrying capacity would be reduced by two.

A tank usually has a crew of four (a driver, machine gunner, and two cannon operators), usually led by a NCO. If the Army has three tanks, one crewman can be a leader; if five tanks, then one crewman can be a hero.

It takes half of a turn's worth of movement to load or unload a vehicle. The penalty applies both to the movement of the soldiers being loaded or unloaded and to the movement of the vehicles that turn. In effect, this means that only soldiers within 3" of a vehicle will be able to load into it, and that the vehicle can move only 9" that turn. Likewise, on the turn the vehicle unloads, it can move only 9" and the offloaded soldiers will be able to move only 3".

The penalty for moving out of contact with a dinosaur is calculated before the half-movement penalty for loading or unloading is applied. Thus, a truck (movement 18") in contact with a dinosaur could move only 6" away to unload its passengers ( $18 - 6 = 12$ ,  $12 \div 2 = 6$ ), who would have another 2" of movement ( $6 - 2 = 4$ ,  $4 - 2 = 2$ ).

Unless the optional "moving fire" rule is being used, troops carried in, or on, a vehicle will not be able to fire until they are unloaded.

### **Vehicle Personnel Casualties**

If a vehicle is destroyed, there is a chance that its driver, crew, and passengers will be killed. The Army player should roll 2d6 for every individual in or on the vehicle at the time it is destroyed. On a roll of 7 or less, the individual survives; on a roll of 8 or more, he is killed. Special Army figures are allowed their usual luck rolls should they fail this survival roll.

### **Towing & Setting Up Weapons**

A truck, halftrack, or tank can tow light artillery or a recoilless rifle. Movement while towing is one-half normal. This

movement penalty is cumulative with any other penalties. Thus a truck towing a recoilless rifle and picking up passengers could move only  $4\frac{1}{2}$ " that turn.

It takes a full turn to hitch or unhitch a weapon. After the weapon is unhitched, it will be ready for fire on the next turn. The vehicle can also transport the weapon's crew.

Once placed, heavy artillery remains in place for the duration of the game and cannot be moved. Its facing can be changed, however, without penalty.

The lighter crewed weapons, such as machine guns and mortars, take half a turn's movement to set up or dismantle. The minimum crew number listed is also the minimum number needed to move the weapon. If there is not enough movement left to pay the set-up penalty, a weapon cannot be fired. Thus, if a heavy machine gun crew moved 4", they could not then set up their gun and fire in that turn.

### **Ranges**

An Army attack can succeed only if the dinosaur is within range of the particular weapon being used. If there is any debate on whether a dinosaur is within range, give the Army the benefit of the doubt.

If a weapon has two ranges separated by a slash, the first range is for manual fire, and the second is for fire from a fixed position (i.e., a tripod, bipod, vehicle mount).

Mortars have a special minimum range, since they are arced-fire weapons whose shells are lobbed at the enemy. Thus, a mortar must have at least 18" of range to fire effectively, but will not be able to attack beyond 60".

### **Line of Sight**

A direct-fire weapon has a single attack score and must have a line of sight to be able to fire (if a man can't see a dinosaur, he can't shoot at it). Line of sight can be blocked by unusual terrain, vehicles, or other dinosaurs. If there is any disagreement about line of sight, give the Army the benefit of the doubt.

### **Indirect Fire**

Weapons that have two attack scores divided by a slash (e.g., mortars and artillery) are allowed indirect fire. They can shoot at a target they cannot see as long as some soldier, who can see the dinosaur, acts as a spotter. Any individual may act as a spotter for indirect artillery fire. It is easiest to assume that all figures and vehicles in the Army are in radio contact with each other. If a spotter calls down fire, he can shoot his personal weapon only once that turn. Remember to use the second (lesser) attack score for indirect fire only; the first score is for direct fire.

### **The Rambo Rule**

A hero (and only a hero) can pick up a light machine gun and fire it manually. This is the one instance where this

weapon can be fired without its full crew for more than just one turn. Roll 1d6 to see how many turns' worth of ammunition are already loaded into the light machine gun when the hero picks it up to fire. Use the unfixed range (24") for the weapon.

### **Scale**

The movement rates and ranges given are for 1:32 (54 mm) scale (1:35 scale is essentially the same). This is the usual scale for toy plastic soldiers, and many rubber dinosaurs and plastic model kits are on the market in that scale. The same scale is appropriate for some "action figure" toys.

There is a second, equally useful scale. Most plastic dinosaurs come in approximately 1:76 or 1:72 scale. Extensive figure and vehicle model lines are in this smaller scale. This scale would be applicable for human figures as small as 15 mm and as large as 25 mm. If the smaller scale is used, reduce all movement rates and ranges (including any movement penalties) by half. Thus, a Tyrannosaurus would move 9" and spend 1" for an overrun.

There is no need to be fanatical about scale. The idea is to have fun without spending a lot of money on figures. Use what you can get. Reasonably faithful scale figures simply look better; a Tyrannosaurus appears a lot more frightening if it stands four times the height of a man. Scales could be mixed if necessary, using the larger soldiers but the smaller dinosaurs (since both are available in cheap plastic bags at toy stores, drug stores, hobby stores, etc.). Figures of different scales can also be combined; in particular, the smaller dinosaurs can be used with the larger ones as young dinosaurs having fewer life points and doing less damage.

The larger scale is best played on a large floor or in a yard. The smaller scale can be played on a large table. If space is a problem, lower the movement rates and ranges accordingly. Dividing these values by three or even four will allow play on an average-sized kitchen table. As long as the proportion is kept the same throughout, the rules will play well.

### **Optional Rules**

All optional rules have been rated, showing which side they are likely to favor and how strong the change will probably be. Letters are used to denote which side is favored. "A" means the rule favors the Army; "D" means the rule favors the dinosaurs; "N" means the rule favors neither side. Rules that favor one side or the other are also rated from 1-5, with 1 meaning the rule only slightly favors that particular side, while 5 means the rule highly favors that side. The ratings were included to help players adjust the play balance when deciding which optional rules to use.

**Terrain penalties (D1):** A bit of terrain can spruce up any battlefield, be it the kitchen table or the backyard. Model trees, potted plants, styrofoam hills, gravel



from the driveway, vacuform terrain, tree branches—use whatever works.

For simplicity, all terrain except the playing surface (table, floor, or ground) is considered “unusual” and has a penalty when moved through. The movement penalty is 2” for soldiers and dinosaurs, and 6” for vehicles. The penalty applies if a figure moves through that terrain during any part of the turn. The penalty is paid only once per turn, no matter how many types of unusual terrain are moved through. Thus, a tank moving down a hill, across broken ground, and into the woods still has only a 6” movement penalty.

When calculating movement penalties, always take subtractive penalties first, then calculate divisive penalties. For example, a tank moving out of contact with a dinosaur, over a hill, and unloading passengers could move only 3” that turn ( $18" - 6" - 6" = 6"$ ,  $6" \div 2" = 3"$ ).

If subtractive penalties reduce a figure’s movement to zero, the figure is trying to do too much that turn and must choose between the various options.

Cover (N): Smaller dinosaurs (Coelophysis, Deinonychus, etc.) in appropriate terrain (broken, woods, ruins, etc.) are considered to have cover, and a -1 is applied to attacks against them. Most dinosaurs are too big for cover to be a factor.

If buildings are being used, soldiers inside a building are -1 to be hit only on the first turn any particular dinosaur attacks the building. Thus, the first time a Tyrannosaurus attacks soldiers inside a building, it fails on a roll of 10-12. After the first attack, the Tyrannosaurus hits normally. Smaller dinosaurs are considered to have broken into the building, and larger ones to have broken down the building.

**Dive move (D2):** Flying dinosaurs gain a special dive move when swooping down on their prey. The move is measured directly on the diagonal instead of using the horizontal-vertical method. It thus shortens movement into an attack. Such a move is really appropriate only when the dinosaur is diving to attack, not when it is climbing for altitude.

**Minimum altitude (A2):** Each time a flying dinosaur takes to the air, it must move at least 6” upward. If the dinosaur does not attain at least 6” of altitude, its movement in that turn is limited to half normal (i.e., to only 18”).

**Dino rage (D5):** A dinosaur does not die when reduced to 0 LP. Instead, like a special Army figure, it gets a luck roll. It can then continue to fight on as long as it keeps making a luck roll after every successful shot by the Army. The dinosaur luck roll depends on its attack-score, as per the following table:

Attack score	Luck roll
8	6
9	7
10	8

**Ramming move (A3):** Normally, vehicles attack only with whatever weapons are mounted on them. As an option, allow a vehicle to make a ramming attack on a dinosaur. If the vehicle has enough movement, the ramming attack will succeed on a roll of 10 or less on 2d6. On a roll of 11 or 12, the dinosaur evades the ramming vehicle. Whether the attack succeeds or not, a vehicle that chooses to ram a dinosaur will wreck its suspension and be immobile for the rest of the game. The Army player can still fire the vehicle’s weapons, if appropriate.

If the ramming attack succeeds, the vehicle does life-point damage equal to its structural points. Thus, a jeep would do 3 LP on a ramming attack, while a tank would do 15 LP.

**Moving fire (A4):** Troops carried in or on vehicles do not normally fire until they are offloaded. If this optional rule is used, allow half of the carried troops to fire while the vehicle is in motion (round numbers up). Firing while in or on a vehicle has a -2 attack penalty, however. Thus, a rifleman would need to roll 5 or less on his attack while in the back of a truck.

**High-caliber ammo (A1):** Table 3 assumes standard ammunition for the weapons. Rifles and pistols can come in varieties using high-caliber bullets with more stopping power than standard ammunition. If high-caliber ammunition is used, the damage is increased to 2 LP but the attack score is lowered by 1. Thus, a .44 magnum revolver would do 2 LP damage and have an attack score of 6.

**Snipers (A3):** One soldier per 10 Army men can be designated a sniper. A sniper increases the range of his rifle or assault rifle by 6” and gets a +1 modifier on his attack score. A sniper could also be an NCO or hero (but not a leader), in which case he would get a +2 bonus on his attack.

**Limited grenades (D3):** In the regular rules, the Army player does not keep track of how many grenades each soldier throws. As long as a soldier can move into position to throw a grenade, he can do so. Optionally, each regular soldier carries only one hand grenade, though NCOs, leaders, and heroes still have unlimited supplies of grenades.

**Fire into combat (D4):** In the regular rules, soldiers can fire at dinosaurs even if the dinosaur is currently fighting (i.e., in contact with) another soldier or a vehicle, without risk of hurting the friendly soldier or vehicle. As an optional rule, if the Army fires into an ongoing combat, the friendly figure or vehicle might be hit by accident.

If the shot hits the dinosaur, there is no problem. If the shot misses, it might hit the figure or vehicle the dinosaur was fighting. Roll 2d6; on a roll of 10 or higher, the shot hit the friendly figure or vehicle. Roll for each appropriate miss. Multiple damage applies if the target is a vehicle.

**Special forces (A4):** The Army player can have one small unit consisting entirely

of heroes. This elite unit should be no larger than 20% of the total Army size. The unit represents one of the special forces of the world’s armies (Green Berets, SAS, Rangers, Spetsnaz, commandos, paratroopers, etc.).

**Wounded men (D3):** Any special Army figure who is hit by a dinosaur but makes his luck roll is wounded. The figure loses his attack bonus for the rest of the game (including the sniper bonus, if applicable). If this rule is used, it will be necessary to keep track of wounded figures in the same way a player keeps track of wounded dinosaurs and vehicles.

**Paratroopers (A3):** One small unit, no larger than 20% of the Army, can be designated as paratroopers. This unit’s setup is handled differently than other Army units. To simulate the paratroop, the Army player makes a paper airplane and launches it from one edge of the playing surface (player’s choice of which edge). Within 2” of wherever the paper airplane lands is where the paratroopers set up. If the airplane flies completely beyond the playing surface, allow the player to try again on his next turn, until the plane eventually lands inside the playing surface.

**Dino charge (D2):** On the first time a dinosaur attacks (and only then), give it an additional 2” of movement to simulate an enraged charge. This bonus might allow an additional overrun attack.

If all of the optional rules are used, the advantages in point values are equal for both sides.

## Play balance

The following point system offers a way to balance both sides in the game. First, total up the points for the Army. The dinosaur side should have approximately twice as many points as the Army in order for the battle to be fair.

A basic Army soldier is worth two points. An NCO is worth three points, a leader is worth four, and a hero is worth five. A vehicle’s point cost equals its structural-point value, plus additional points for its crew (as per regular soldier values), with an additional point for a mounted machine gun and two points for a mounted cannon. For each crewed weapon, add a modifier equal to one less than the minimum crew size required.

The point-cost system allows players to design vehicles and Army groups. For simplicity, some average vehicle point costs and crewed weapon’s modifiers are listed below. The first point value is for an unarmed vehicle; the second is for an armed one.

Vehicle	Points
Motorcycle	2/4
Jeep	4/6
Truck	5/7
Halftrack	6/10
Armored car	7/11
APC	7/9
Tank	-/22

Each dinosaur has a point cost equal to its life-point value. A +1 modifier is given if the dinosaur moves faster than 24".

**Example:** One player controls an Army group of 22 soldiers, including two NCOs, one leader, and one hero. The group has a heavy machine gun and a mortar. Attached to the group is one tank (with a tank gun and machine gun) plus an unarmed truck. The point size for the group would therefore be 80 points (44 soldier points +7 for special figures +2 for special weapons +22 points for the tank +5 points for the truck).

Battling the Army group are two Tyrannosaurs (30 points), two Triceratopses (30 points), an Apatosaurus (24 points), two Dimetrodons (12 points), two Plateosaurs (14 points), two Stegosaurus (20 points), three Pterodactyls (6 points), and two Ankylosaurus (24 points). The dinosaur side totals 160 points.

## Game Setup

There are two kinds of setup: random and deliberate. In either case, dinosaurs cannot be set up closer than 24" (preferably 36") to any Army soldier or vehicle. Two setup examples are given below. "Dino Island" is a random setup. "Time Gate" is a deliberate setup.

**Dino Island:** The playing area simulates an island. The playing surface is about 200 square feet in size (12' x 15' will work). Neither side can leave the island at any time. Take 12 chits or scraps of paper, numbered 1-12. Distribute them across the playing area in 12 different locations, separated by at least 24" if the chits are placed on the most prominent landmarks or by 36" if spaced evenly in a 3 x 4 grid.

Each side has three players. Each player on the Army team has an Army group of 50-100 points, and each dinosaur player has one-third of the dinosaurs. Setup is random. Using a set of 12 duplicate chits, have each player draw one chit to determine where he can set up. The first figure he places must go on the spot marked. The other figures in his team are placed near the first one in any order he wants, but no further than 12" away from the marked spot. Alternatively, a dinosaur player places one of his figures first, then an Army player puts down one of his, and this alternating setup continues until all six players are set up.

The battle is a fight to the death. Once one side has been completely wiped out, the game ends.

**Variations:** A fourth Army player can control all the tanks; the dinosaur total is then divided into four teams, too. Point values, playing areas, number of players, and setup spaces may all be varied as well.

**Time Gate:** The premise of this scenario is that the Army force has become lost in time. The only way back to its own time is through a special gate. The gate sets up a field between two poles, spaced scale inches apart. Unfortunately, the

Army has only one of the poles. The other is hidden somewhere in dinosaur territory. The Army must invade the land of the dinosaurs and search until the second pole is found. The poles can then be set up so the soldiers can go home.

It helps to have a neutral referee to place the second pole in a reasonable spot and oversee hidden movement. Dinosaurs can hide behind unusual terrain and will thus not be spotted until an Army player comes within 18" of them. Hidden dinosaurs are not placed until spotted. Both sides can divide their total forces any way they wish (thus the Army can form recon squads). The setup area can vary as circumstances dictate, as long as there is ample room for movement. Two soldiers can carry the gate pole, or it can be loaded into a vehicle (it takes up the space of one soldier).

The game ends when the Army escapes back to its own time, or when the dinosaurs wipe out all the Army men.

**Variation:** The Army begins the game entirely mechanized. To compensate, add several areas of impassable terrain (deep swamps, high mountains, etc.).

## Dinosaur Descriptions

Dinosaurs and the other unusual reptiles used in this game are detailed in the following section, with notes on their sizes, diets, and geologic period in which they were found. The Permian period lasted from 286 to 248 million years ago, and came just before the three great ages of dinosaurs in the Mesozoic era. The dinosaur ages were the Triassic (248-213 million years ago), the Jurassic (213-144 million years ago), and the Cretaceous (144-65 million years ago).

**Allosaurus:** 40' long, 15' tall, 3 tons; carnivore; Jurassic. The most dangerous predator of its time, Allosaurus had clawed forelimbs and hind legs for pinning down its prey, and a huge mouth for ripping open flesh.

**Anatosaurus:** 30' long, 13' tall, 4 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. This was the classic "duck-billed" dinosaur, so named for its long, low skull that resembles a duck's bill and its webbed, three-toed feet. Similar duckbills grew as large as 43' long and 5 tons.

**Ankylosaurus:** 35' long, 6 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. This creature's body was completely protected by a shell-like mass of bony plates. The tail, ending in a heavy club, could be swung at enemies with fatal results.

**Apatosaurus:** 70' long, 14½' at shoulder, 33 tons; herbivore; Jurassic. More popularly known as Brontosaurus, this monster's prime defenses were its long, whiplike tail and its ability to rear up on its hind legs and bring its great weight crashing down on an enemy.

**Brachiosaurus:** 75' long, 21' at shoulder, 89 tons; herbivore; Jurassic. One of the most massive, though not longest, animals ever to walk the Earth, Brachio-

saurus had a long neck and served the same ecological function as a giraffe, browsing off treetops. The nasal openings at the top of its skull indicate it might have had some kind of trunk.

**Ceratosaurus:** 20' long, 8' tall, 1 ton; carnivore; Jurassic. This swift, savage carnosaur had a bony ridge above each eye and a hornlike growth above its nose. Fossil footprints suggest it may have hunted in packs.

**Coelophysis:** 10' long, 5½' tall, 65 lbs.; carnivore; Triassic. This light, agile creature had hollow bones and could run swiftly on its birdlike legs. It may have hunted in packs and may have been cannibalistic.

**Deinonychus:** 13' long, 7' tall, 300 lbs.; carnivore; Cretaceous. Deinonychus had a comparatively large brain and probably hunted in packs. Its second toe bore a sickle-shaped claw nearly 6" long that could be raised up and back when running.

**Deinocheirus:** 40' long, 20' tall; 2 tons; carnivore; Cretaceous. Known only from a pair of 8½'-long arms (each ending in claws 8" long), this could represent a type of large, fast dinosaur that primarily used its claws instead of its teeth to hunt.

**Deinosuchus:** 50' long, 9 tons; carnivore; Cretaceous. The largest known crocodile, this was not a dinosaur but would have been contemporary with them.

**Dimetrodon:** 13' long, 1 ton; carnivore; Permian. The Dimetrodon was not actually a dinosaur, but a reptile that lived some 50 million years before dinosaurs evolved. It is characterized by its spiny "sail back," that probably served to control the reptile's body temperature.

**Diplodocus:** 90' long, 16 tons; herbivore; Jurassic. With its tremendous snake neck and long whiplike tail, this dinosaur was among the longest to walk the land.

**Dolichosuchus:** 18' long, 10' tall, 350 lbs.; carnivore; Triassic. This dinosaur was similar to Coelophysis, only larger.

**Dryptosaurus:** 22' long, 8' tall, 500 lbs.; carnivore; Cretaceous. Dryptosaurus had huge back legs that might have been used to leap upon prey.

**Gallimimus:** 13' long, 7' tall, 250 lbs.; omnivore; Cretaceous. Gallimimus was the largest known ostrichlike dinosaur.

**Hylaeosaurus:** 20' long, 3 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. Hylaeosaurus was the third dinosaur discovered (1832). It had a series of large, hard, symmetrical plates growing down its head and back, plus protective spikes growing out of its sides and up its tail.

**Iguanodon:** 30' long, 16½' tall, 6 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. The second dinosaur discovered (1822), this bipedal dinosaur was strong and bulky, with curious spikelike thumbs.

**Megalosaurus:** 30' long, 12' tall, 1½ ton; carnivore; Jurassic and Cretaceous. The first dinosaur discovered (1677) and named (1824), Megalosaurus was a typical



carnosaur with a bulky neck, large jaws, large hind legs, shorter forelegs, and a long tail.

**Monoclonius:** 20' long, 3 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. Monoclonius had a short, scalloped-bone frill. Above each eye was a small horn, and above its snout was an extremely long horn, like that of a rhinoceros.

**Pachycephalosaurus:** 15' long, 8' tall, 800 lbs.; herbivore; Cretaceous. The classic "bone-headed" dinosaur, this one's brain was encased in a solid dome of bone 10" thick. It could have used head-butting as a defense and as a mating ritual.

**Paleoscincus:** 23' long, 4 tons; herbivore, Cretaceous. Paleoscincus had solid armor plates on its back, and spines on its flank and tail.

**Parasaurolophus:** 33' long, 23' tall, 5 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. This dinosaur is noted for its crest in the shape of a great tube extending from the back of its skull.

**Plateosaurus:** 26' long, 2 tons; omnivore; Triassic. A mostly bipedal dinosaur that sometimes went on all fours, this was a possible ancestor of the later herbivorous giants like Apatosaurus and Diplodocus.

**Pterodactyl:** 13' wingspan; 15 lbs.; piscivore (fish-eater); Jurassic. This flying reptile was not actually a dinosaur. Elongated arm and hand bones supported its wings.

**Pteranodon:** 23' wingspan, 40 lbs.; piscivore; Cretaceous. Another flying reptile that was not actually a dinosaur, Pteranodon's elongated crest behind its head probably acted as a stabilizer in flight.

**Quetzalcoatlus:** 39' wingspan, 150 lbs.; piscivore; Cretaceous. A flying reptile (not a dinosaur) known from only fragmentary remains, it may have been the largest flying creature of all time.

**Saltasaurus:** 40' long, 8 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. Saltasaurus had thousands of small bony studs and a plates guarding its broad back and sides, but otherwise it looked like a small Apatosaurus.

**Spinosaurus:** 40' long, 7 tons; carnivore; Cretaceous. Spinosaurus had a sail on its back that was taller than a

**Stegosaurus:** 30' long, 4 tons; herbivore; Jurassic. Stegosaurus is noted for the two rows of alternating triangular plates running along its back. Its real defense was its tail spikes. It had an enlargement of the spinal cord above its hind legs that may have acted like a "second brain" to control the movement of its legs and tail.

**Stenonychosaurus:** 6½' long, 80 lbs.; omnivore; Cretaceous. An agile rapid runner roughly the size of a man (though lighter), it had probably the largest brain-to-body ratio of any dinosaur.

**Styracosaurus:** 18' long, 2½ tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. This dinosaur had

a short, bony frill endowed with a number of long, backward-pointing spikes. It had a single long horn growing from its nose.

**Therizinosaurus:** 35' long, 18' tall, 1½ tons; carnivore; Cretaceous. Known from only a single arm that was more than 8' long, this carnosaur had claws nearly 1' long. Like Deinocoelurus, it could represent a type of fast dinosaur that hunted primarily with its claws instead of its jaws.

**Torosaurus:** 25' long, 6 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. Torosaurus resembled Triceratops, but had a much larger frill-crest (reaching almost halfway down its back).

**Triceratops:** 30' long, 9 tons; herbivore; Cretaceous. This fierce-looking dinosaur had a short, solid frill and three horns: two long ones (up to 3' long) over its eyes, and one short horn over its snout.

**Tyrannosaurus:** 50' long, 20' tall, 8 tons; carnivore; Cretaceous. Tyrannosaurus may have been the most powerful carnivore to ever walk this planet. It had a huge head with daggerlike teeth 6" long, massive hind legs, a long tail, and ridiculously short forearms.

Recent but as yet incomplete findings show that there were even larger sauropods than Brachiosaurus and Diplodocus. In the 1970s, massive bones from two sauropods were found in Colorado and unofficially called Supersaurus and Ultrasaurus. Then, in 1986, even larger bones were unearthed in New Mexico, and provisionally named Seismosaurus. These bones suggest dinosaurs who were more than 100' long and weighed over 100 tons. Breviparopus, named after fossilized footprints only, may have been 157' long.

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**Table 1**  
**Dinosaur Statistics**

Dinosaur	Life points	Movement	Attack score	Damage	Armor
Allosaurus	10	18"	10	3*	-
Anatosaurus	10	18"	8	2*	-
Ankylosaurus	12	12"	9	2*	2
Apatosaurus	24	12"	8	2**	-
Brachiosaurus	32	12"	8	2**	-
Ceratosaurus	7	18"	9	2*	-
Coelophysis	1	24"	9	1	-
Deinonychus	3	24"	10	1	-
Deinotherius	9	24"	10	1	-
Deinosuchus	15	12"/24"***	9	3**	1
Dimetrodon	6	18"	9	2	-
Diplodocus	20	12"	8	2**	-
Dolichosuchus	4	24"	10	2	-
Dryptosaurus	6	18"	10	2	-
Gallimimus	3	24"	10	1*	-
Hylaeosaurus	10	12"	9	2*	2
Iguanodon	12	18"	8	2*	-
Megalosaurus	8	18"	10	2*	-
Monoclonius	9	18"	9	3*	1/-
Pachycephalosaurus	5	24"	9	2*	-
Paleoscincus	10	12"	9	2*	2
Parasaurolophus	11	18"	8	2*	-
Plateosaurus	8	18"	8	2	-
Pterodactyl	1	36"	9	1	-
Pteranodon	2	36"	9	1	-
Qietzalcoatlus	3	36"	9	1*	-
Saltasaurus	14	12"	8	2*	1
Spinosaurus	14	18"	10	3*	-
Stegosaurus	11	18"	9	2*	1
Stenonychosaurus	1	24"	10	1	-
Styracosaurus	9	18"	9	3*	1/-
Therizinosaurus	7	24"	10	3*	-
Tbrosaurus	12	18"	9	3**	1/-
Triceratops	14	18"	9	3**	1/-
Tyrannosaurus	15	18"	10	3**	-

\* Automatically destroys any non-tank vehicle on a 2.

\*\* Destroys any non-tank vehicle on 2-3; destroys a tank on a 2.

\*\*\* Movement rate of 24" across water only.

**Table 2**  
**Dinosaur Movement Modifiers**

Situation	Modifier
Overrun	- 2"
Unusual terrain (optional)	- 2"
Charge (optional)	+2"

\* First turn of attacking only





**Table 3**  
**Army Weapons**

Weapon	Range	Damage	Attack score	Minimum crew
Rifle *	18"	1	7	-
Assault rifle *	12"	2	8	-
Submachine gun*	6"	2	8	-
Pistol *	6"	1	7	-
Grenade	3"	3 **	8	-
Flame thrower	6"	3	6	-
Automatic rifle *	18" / 24"	2	8	-
Bazooka/rocket	12"	3 **	6	-
Light machine gun*	24" / 36"	2	9	2
Heavy machine gun*	48"	2	9	2
Recoilless rifle	24"	3 **	7	2
Mortar	18" - 60"	3 **	7/6	2
Light artillery/tank gun	60"	3 **	9/7	3
Heavy artillery	72"	3 **	9/7	4

\* Can make two attacks per turn.

\*\* Automatic kill on an attack roll of 2

**Table 4**  
**Army Attack Modifiers**

- +1 hero/leader/NCO
- +1 for all snipers (optional)
- x (x = any dinosaur armor)
- 1 for cover (optional)
- 1 higher-caliber ammo (optional)
- 2 moving fire (optional)

**Table 5**  
**Army Vehicles**

Vehicle	Structural points	Carry capacity	Crew
Motorcycle	1	1	1(2)
Jeep	3	3	1(2)
Truck	4	8	1(2)
Halftrack	5	4	1-3
Armored car	6	3	1-3
Armored personnel carrier	6	6	1(2)
Tank	15	4	4

**Table 6**  
**Army Movement Modifiers**

Condition	Soldiers	Vehicles
Base rate	6"	18"
Escape from dinosaur	-2"	-2"
Load/unload vehicle	x ½	x ½
Set up/dismantle weapon	x ½	-
Towing artillery	-	x ½
Unusual terrain (optional)	-2"	-6"

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Telguin had been on the highway for most of the morning when he saw his first local. Actually, he heard and smelled her long before she crested the dusty ridge. Scrambling into the thorny scrub lining the rutted road, he settled his bulk between two large rocks and waited.

An instant later his mark struggled into view. She was an old woman, poorly dressed and barefoot, a peasant. He had often seen her like in his travels. Social striations tended to be the same wherever you went.

The woman was mumbling something to herself, or perhaps to the broken-down packbeast that she led. "Aay, Missie, so I told him. But he listen? No! Temple-cursed half-bloods in the midwives' quarter. No telling what diseases. So he says, Sarie, we got no choice . . ."

Telguin didn't concern himself with the content, only the accent. He let her clacking consonants and screechy vowels roll off his integument. Finally he felt he had the right taste. Emboldened to try, he roused his great mass, stepped into the roadway astride her path, and uttered his first words in her language. "Sarie, I say. I hunger, and need fuel." He hesitated, not knowing the words, and gestured toward her animal companion. "Like your beast here."

Filmed, decrepit eyes widened in fear. The hag trembled. "Eat my Missy, monster?" She backed a step and tried to build some courage with a quavering threat. "I warn you, fiend, I'm a member of the Midwives' Guild. We have powerful patrons. Best you flit along to whatever hell you come from." Wrinkled hands clutched at the packbeast. "She's not for the likes of you."

*She's not for the likes of you.* Telguin pondered the cryptic statement. Already this short discourse had improved his command of the tongue. Obviously the peasant thought that he was requesting aid from the animal. Was it also a sentient? "No'," he clicked, painfully stretching his mouth around the words. "Need fuel like she does. I require you."

The old woman started to back up. "Now, wait a minute there, Mr. Demon, sir. I ain't got but scant flesh on these old bones. Wouldn't serve up a good meal." She edged off in the other direction.

Now they were getting somewhere—fuel, and a meal. Telguin nodded eagerly. "Yes, you provide me sustenance."

"Fine, fine. Take her then. Just leave me be."

Telguin didn't understand, but he appreciated the gift. He raised one of his pods to thank her.

She shrieked and ran screaming into the brush.

Telguin rippled, his equivalent of a shrug. People here had strange customs. He examined the placid packbeast. Now why would she leave him that? Perhaps it allowed access to what he sought. He rippled again. Well, it was best to take the creature along. It might be of some use.

Ponderously rolling along the way, Telguin looked back to find that the creature was not following. What was the matter? He remembered his difficulties with the woman. He rolled back to where it listlessly chewed its cud. Long ears drooped in the dust.

Inspiration struck him. He envisioned the woman, her

# Rest Stop

by J. W. Donnelly

*Illustrations by Erik Baker*

spindly limbs and warts, the scratchy voice, the rank odor of rotting teeth. His integument tightened, and his volume contracted. Telguin inspected his new arm, admiring the withered hand. He flexed it, ran it over his brown peasant blouse. Perfect. Unused to such unusual locomotion, he slowly hobbled over to the animal—Missy, that was its name—and grasped the rough lead rope: “Come along now, Missy,” rasped his grating voice. The beast followed. Telguin smiled the hideous gap-toothed grimace of an aging peasant woman.

He traveled for some time, meeting no others of the local citizenry. The worn dirt road eventually merged into more civilized surroundings, the surface below him now paved in flat, interlocking stones. Telguin’s spirits rose. Now he would be able to contact the appropriate parties to see to his needs. He did not have long to wait.

The bloated green sun had descended quickly after zenith. It hung low on the horizon, staining the local fields in shades of malachite and aqua. The land here was cultivated. Telguin swung along, confident that a contact was imminent.

Again he heard them before he saw them. Something rustled behind him. “Ho, she moves pretty well for an ancient crone, eh Bolar?”

“Says you straight, Lelk.”

Telguin slowly turned. Two rather ragged individuals leered at him. He grinned in relief, “Greetings, fellow peasants. I require your assistance.” Telguin smiled more broadly, proud of his increasing vocabulary.

The two highwaymen looked at each other in amusement. “ ‘Fellow peasants’ says she?” one chortled.

“Requires our assistance?” barked the other.

“Yes.” Finally, he was getting somewhere. “My vehicle is in need of service.”

The taller one stared sharply at him. “What? You got a cart or something? Up the way a bit, broken down maybe?” A cruel smile slowly crossed his features. “Our lucky day, Bolar.”

His companion nodded eagerly, brushing past Telguin to grab at Missy. “And what’s a cart without its ass?” he chuckled, amused at his own humor. “Hey, you ugly midwife, thanks for the ride.” He laughed again.

Telguin grabbed this one’s wrist. “Wait, you don’t understand.” The wrist bent back at an awkward angle. The brigand shouted. Startled, Telguin let go. He hadn’t meant to harm the man.

Bolar had collapsed to his knees. “Lelk, do her. She isn’t normal.”

Telguin sensed the movement. A sharp pain drove into his side. He staggered.

Another knife was slammed into his stomach. He gasped. This time his concentration was broken. His form wavered.

Bolar had stood up. His voice was savage. “Right, Lelko boy. Showed her straight. Now—” His mouth dropped open.

Telguin felt the stirrings of anger. These locals were proving most uncooperative. He swiveled his bulk toward the tall one.

Lelk had pulled yet a third dagger, his fist raised for another strike. The weapon dropped from numbed fin-

gers. “By the many vipers of the Vert plains, a demon! Run!”

With that exclamation, the tall peasant rushed off into a field. The tinted stalks closed around him, erasing the signs of his flight. By the scrabbling behind him, Telguin inferred that the other man was also hastily departing.

The pain was almost gone. Telguin analyzed the intrusions and tried a brief taste. Delight and surprise coursed over his form. Why, they were delicious: a heavy iron content, with just the right touch of carbon. Telguin felt shamed. He had misjudged these people. Their ways were unusual, true, but he regretted his hasty and impolite actions.

Nightfall was imminent. His quest would have to wait. Taking a clue from the taller man, Telguin rolled into the field. Out of sight from the highway, he could rest and conserve his energies. Soon there would be no sun to power his chemical reactions, but the thoughtful gift of the iron shards would sustain him through the darkness. He wondered how they had known what to provide for him. Maybe these people had encountered his kind before. The thought heartened him, and Telguin settled down to wait out the night.

The contemplation of the low-energy state speeded up his perception of time considerably. The first green rays of dawn prodded Telguin into awareness. He bathed luxuriously in the light before scavenging about for something to eat. All he found were some low-grade copper ores. Still, it was better than nothing. Telguin ate.

He had been thinking, and considered the data as he finished his breakfast. All sentient forms thus far encountered here had four limbs: two for motivating and two for manipulating. Evidently there was a taboo against other ways of getting around. Every time he rolled, someone yelled “demon.” Well, from now on he would be a four-limbed entity. No one would be able to accuse him of “demoning” again.

Telguin thought some more. The form that the old female had worn didn’t seem to inspire respect. Then again, all three individuals had worn a peculiar raiment. He would keep that; also, the rounded stub on the top with the little orifices. A few minutes concentration and he had what he wanted. Satisfied, Telguin made for the paved surface.

Missy, the packbeast, had disappeared during the night. Telguin shrugged and felt some strain from the new gesture. He utilized this experience to help further flesh out his neck. Attired in proper form and clothing, ambulating in the local mode, Telguin moved down the road. The emerald flush of the new morning grew brighter, casting diminishing shadows behind his pallid, doughy form.

It was midmorning before he caught sight of the city. He knew it was a city, not due to its shape but because of the function. Large numbers of individuals streamed to it. They all had two legs. Telguin nodded, pleased with his cleverness.

He started down, for the city lay in a shallow valley. Scattered fields hugged at its walls, cowering under the vastness of the aquamarine sky. Telguin marvelled at the walls, wondering about their purpose. Might these be energy conductors? Possible, but they seemed too rigid.



He made it to an entrance without further incident, joining the flow of people into the interior. At first they stared and kept their distance from him, quickly averting furtive eyes when he nodded or smiled a greeting. Eventually the press became too great for such considerations, however, and he found himself elbow to elbow with the great wash of peasants. The smell hit him like a wave. The taste was of oil and dirt.

Telguin was jostled by the throng into a courtyard. His stomach growled in protest. Casting about, he spied a man with one of the delicious iron shards. In fact, the man was literally coated in food. Bands of the same substance crossed his entire torso. Certainly here was a food merchant. Telguin tried to inquire. "Eh, excuse me. I'm hungry. How much?"

The man's eyes narrowed, his hand going to the iron shard. "Away from me, whatever you are, or I'll have the guard on you."

Slightly hurt, Telguin backed off. The man was unbearably selfish. Surely he couldn't eat all of that? One more longing glance, and he moved back into the crowd.

Initial impressions seemed correct. This was an area for merchants. The odd wares and gaily colored trappings were unfamiliar, but Telguin recognized the hungry, predatory glances of the proprietors. Here was a place where the unusual, the unknown, and the unlawful changed hands. Luckily, his own needs were much more mundane. Surely someone here sold fuel.

Telguin examined each stall, recognizing some of the merchandise. Other items for sale were utterly mysterious, such as the decaying stumps of fats and proteins around which the merchants wrapped sheets of beaten plant fiber. Swarms of tiny black creatures buzzed around these stalls. It was most bizarre and somewhat unpleasant. Telguin left.

Aimlessly he wandered, not sure where to look. The hawking merchants extolling the virtues of their wares, the milling peasants, and the film of dust that they raised lent the entire scene a certain dreamlike aura. Telguin felt lost.

A ringing voice, more strident than the others, caught at his attention. He drifted in that direction. The source was a stall three times the size of the more typical units. The gilded canopy and sturdy wooden display tables indicated an affluence far exceeding that of the other peddlers. "Ah," thought Telguin, recalling the wealth of the energy merchants with which he was familiar, "now here is an individual with the answer to my needs." Rubbing his sallow face, he sauntered over.

The proprietor, a chubby little fellow swathed in worn vermilion and purple robes, was in the midst of his sales pitch when he caught sight of Telguin. "Potions, baubles, and charms made to order. Step right up folks. Sorcery made to fit all occasions. Need a curse removed? I've got anti-geas formulas. Orc infestations getting you down? Try one of our fabled singing swords. We have it all: magics large and small, tailored. to your needs, whether prince or pauper." The spiel died off when Telguin pushed to the front. The merchant uneasily licked his lips. "Uh, yes. What can I do for you, my lord demon?" The man sketched a clumsy bow.

"As you can clearly see, I am not demoning but ambu-

lating in acceptable form." Telguin was impatient. "You seem to be well stocked. My vehicle is in need of service. Can you help?"

"Err . . . right, whatever you say, my lord de— . . . my lord." Fear warred with greed on the merchant's puffy features. "You say you require transportation?"

Telguin was relieved. "Yes, we are short on fuel. I require several drams of hypercoil extract; price is no matter." He hefted a pouch bulging with the cheap food products that these people seemed to value so much.

Crafty eyes narrowed. Plump fingers nervously picked at the false gemstones mounted on multiple rings. "Transport you say. We have relics that might interest the lord." The merchant scabbled through his merchandise, triumphantly unrolled a large embroidered rug. "For instance, note this fine flying carpet, only occasionally utilized by the retainers of our last departed Padishah, may the great ones revere his shining light."

Telguin frowned. "No, I am not hunting for antigrav shuttles. I am talking of larger distances. It must be the extract."

The merchant nodded. "Of course, of course. I understand." His hands flashed beneath the table and came up with a small ring far more plain than those he affected. "I believe I have what you need right here, a ring of teleporting. It will carry you many leagues, taking you past brigands, warlocks, and other dangers—not that the lord could not deal with such petty irritations," the man simpered.

"Interesting, but our vehicle is well equipped with wormhole technology. My needs are more advanced. The hypercoil extract allows us to shift space in no time. Have you any for sale?"

"Exactly." The portly fellow whipped out a flat, black, floppy item. "A portable hole, and for only a few crowns more, I can add a bag of infinite holding."

Telguin yawned, "We already have a tesseract generator." He started to move off. "Maybe I should look elsewhere."

"Wait, wait my lord." This last came out as a whine as the merchant hustled to the rear of his stall. He came wheezing back. "You drive a hard bargain. Here it is then, my most treasured item. Why flee an enemy when you can destroy him? Here is it, the sphere of annihilation." A small, black globe was plopped onto the table.

"Our antimatter containers are well stocked. If you would excuse me, I will look elsewhere for my hypercoil extract." Telguin stalked into the crowd. It parted before his unusual presence.

Dreams of major profit and a potential patron fading, the merchant wobbled around his table. "Wait, my lord." A trailing purple fold snagged on a sharp edge, and with a rip the man went down at Telguin's feet. Pudgy hands closed around his ankles. "No, you can't leave yet. Please let me show you my roc eggs."

His departure halted, Telguin glanced down at the sobbing merchant. The man seemed eager to serve. Warmed by such devotion, he bent down to scoop up the fellow and hug him in gratitude.

The florid little merchant struggled, then screamed as Telguin lifted him. "No, wait, my lord: Have mercy!

Please don't eat my soul."

Telguin paused, confused. Was the man afraid?

"Halt! You there, put merchant Delnacy down." Telguin looked over at this new local. It was one of the men with iron shards who was coated in food. Three similarly attired individuals clustered behind the man.

This seemed hopeful. Food usually was found next to fuel. Telguin carefully set the petrified merchant down. The man scurried away. Telguin shifted to face the four. "I require food and fuel. Do you know the master of this station?"

At the sight of his face, three of the food bearers swore and made unusual warding gestures with their fingers. Their leader blanched, visibly controlling himself. "You are under the custody of the High Padishah of Lekros. You will come with us."

At last, someone who knew what he was doing. Telguin went along amicably. "Excellent. Then this Padishah has the extract I require?"

The leader looked at him queerly. "You speak oddly, stranger. But yes, we have experts in extracting what is required." He smiled grimly. "As for the rest, you must take that up with the wizard Neblis. He is quite good at obtaining the services of demons."

Telguin shook his head, almost totally at ease with the gesture. "But I'm not demoning."

"Hey, no argument there. Take it up with the High Wizard."

Telguin lapsed into silence. These men were obviously attendants and knew nothing of a traveler's requirements. He would discuss it with the Padishah and his High Wizard.

They came to a high gate and, leaving two of their number there, exited the crowded streets. This was a cobbled alley that promptly opened to an archway and darkened tunnel. The bustle of the market died, replaced by the hollow echoes of their footsteps on the damp stone. Guttering torches illuminated the tunnel at random intervals. Telguin thought this to be an inefficient heating system, but these people had many incomprehensible habits. The dank smell of oxidizing iron pulled at him. His mouth watered.

The two others moved slowly, perhaps to further enjoy the delectable odors. Telguin was eager to be on with his business, but he did not complain.

Soon they came to another door, this one bound in brass. One man inserted a key and preceded Telguin through. Unable to help himself, Telguin paused to snatch a brief taste of the door. The greened metal dissolved under his touch.

"Hey, you there. Enough of that." The attendant leader glowered at him, then stared with alarm at the melted door. "By the seven eyes—just don't touch anything."

Telguin sighed but nodded his understanding. His stomach rumbled.

Down another mildewed corridor, and they emerged into a large chamber. Greenish light soaked through opaqued windows, casting the entire contents of the room in a relief like aged copper. Telguin groaned. He couldn't stop thinking of food.

The leader hissed at him. "Silence, fool! We are in the

presence of the high wizard."

Telguin looked around. Strange statues surrounded a dais. Around them were columns of stone, many coated in golden and silver filigree. An ornate seat stood on top of the platform. There was metal everywhere.

One of the statues moved. Belatedly Telguin realized that this was one of the locals, presumably the high wizard himself.

Dark robes whisked along the marble floor as the man approached. A hood hid his face, though his eyes glittered like the many gemstones that bedecked his cloak. Unlike the merchant, this jewelry was of high quality. Telguin was dealing with someone of consequence.

High Wizard Neblis spoke for the first time. "Take the demon to the pentagram. I must render him inert before he is presented to the Padishah." The tone was haughty, comfortable with its own authority.

The two food-clad attendants grasped either arm and led Telguin to the center of the chamber. Then they hurriedly retreated to the door.

Telguin watched them go and looked up to the dark figure on the dais. "I have needs, fuel and food."

Neblis cackled. "Of course you do. All pacts have their prices. But first, I would have your true name."

"I am Telguin. We were just visiting—"

"Telguin it is then, demon." The wizard weaved his hands in an arcane pattern and started to murmur in a tongue Telguin had not yet heard.

Even as he soaked up this new language (obviously it was the language of Neblis' caste), Telguin strove to answer in kind. "Demoning, no. I have adhered to your ways."

Neblis was surprised. "You speak the old tongue, then? Indeed, you will be of surperb service."

"Actually, *we* require some service."

The High Wizard chuckled, "All in good time." The muttering ceased. "Guards."

The head attendant stepped forward. "My Lord Wizard."

"Inform the Padishah that the demon is bound."

"Yes, my lord." The man crossed the chamber and exited by another ornate door.

Telguin stirred. "So, can you help me?"

Neblis froze. "You will be still."

Telguin hesitated. He could wait a bit longer. This Padishah sounded like his man.

The silence stretched into minutes. Telguin fretted but held his ground. If he had to play at these locals' strange games of propriety, so be it. It was worth it for the extract.

The High Wizard stared down at him, implacable in his veiled; cold distance.

Just as Telguin's patience had eroded to the breaking point, he heard the sound of chimes. The far door again swung open. In came a group of the iron-clad attendants, all of them holding metallic shards. They filled the space at the bottom of the dais.

The chimes ceased. A young man entered, his brocade robes stiffened at the flaring collar and sleeves. Slowly he ascended the steps to take his seat on the isolated throne.

The High Wizard bowed. "My Padishah."

Padishah Habdab the Majestic deigned to accept this



greeting and queried the wizard, "So what is this new servant that you have spoken of? Is it this hapless creature below us?" Bored eyes swept over Telguin while fluttering hands idly sought a swollen pimple.

"Yes, my Padishah. It is a demon of great power, one that I have bound for your exclusive service."

The sore erupted with an audible pop. Habdab dabbed at it with a silken edge of his robe. "This sorry specimen?" the nasal voice piped. "And of what use is this demon?"

Telguin had had enough. "I do not demon." He started forward.

"I command thee to stop," chanted Neblis. "By the power of the pentagram I say thee nay."

Telguin crossed the floor to face the Padishah, "Look," he began reasonably, "I can demon if you want." His form shimmered and lapsed back to its natural state.

Habdab's pinched face screwed up in terror. "Daemons protect us. It is a shapeshifter."

Neblis was hurriedly composing another string of archaic syllables. The guards vacillated at their posts.

Telguin rolled his bulk forward to the steps and extended a pseudopod. "Please, some food."

"Aaiii! Help, guards, help!" The throne crashed over backward, and Habdab cowered amidst the splintered wreckage.

One of the attendants, braver than the rest, struck at Telguin with a long stick. The point entered his globular mass about halfway up. Telguin halted to savor the flavor. It was iron.

Eyes bulging, Habdab scuttled to a far corner. Neblis had stopped chanting and stood transfixed by the sight of Telguin. "Neblis," the Padishah mewled, "save me!"

The High Wizard took one look at his Padishah and glanced again at Telguin. There was an explosion of reddish smoke, and he was gone.

This was followed by a shriek of anger, "Neblis, you traitor!"

Telguin glided up the steps and fixed the Padishah in his stare, "And how about the fuel?"

Habdab gurgled in fright, then fainted. Across the room, the last of the guards were making their frantic escapes.

Telguin wondered what was going on now. The Padishah seemed nonfunctional. Could this be his sleep period? He oozed down the steps and slid through one of the doors. Obviously there was no fuel to be found here.

Several of the locals retreated before him until he came to a great courtyard. There the attendants rained many of the metal-tipped sticks, albeit smaller ones, upon him. They were most satisfying. At last he began to feel full. "Thanks, guys, but I couldn't eat another bite." The shower began to slow up as more and more of the attendants made hurried departures.

Telguin found a grated gate and slipped between its square confines. The taste on his integument as he moved through was titillating, but he was no longer hungry. Seeing that he was on a path that led to the city gates, Telguin rolled down in that direction.

No one impeded his progress, and shortly he was out in the countryside. Telguin stretched, enjoying the radiation

of the green sun as it played on his sated body. Up the slopes he rolled, and soon he was on the highway.

With no need to learn local customs and languages, the return trip was much quicker. Half a day of steady rolling (or demoning) brought him to the hidden ship. It was secreted in a small cave located a few hundred paces off the main road.

Gedran was waiting for him. They joined pods in greeting. "Hail and oneness to you, Telguin."

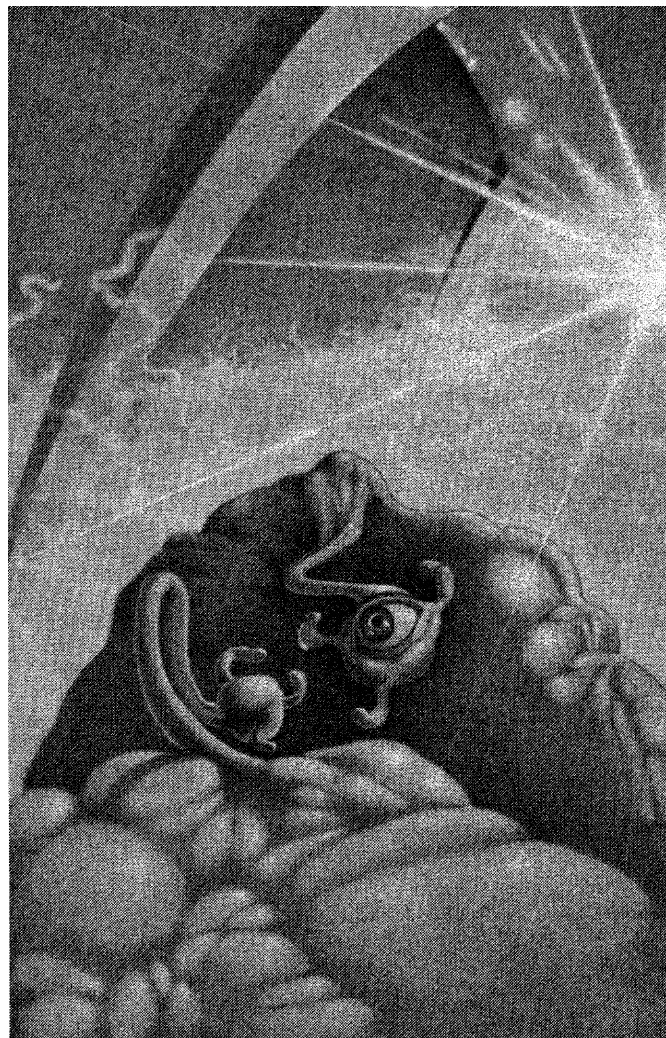
"And to you, Gedran." Telguin slumped tiredly into a bag. "This is a most unusual world."

An eyestalk fixated on him. "Really? And did you find a fuel center?"

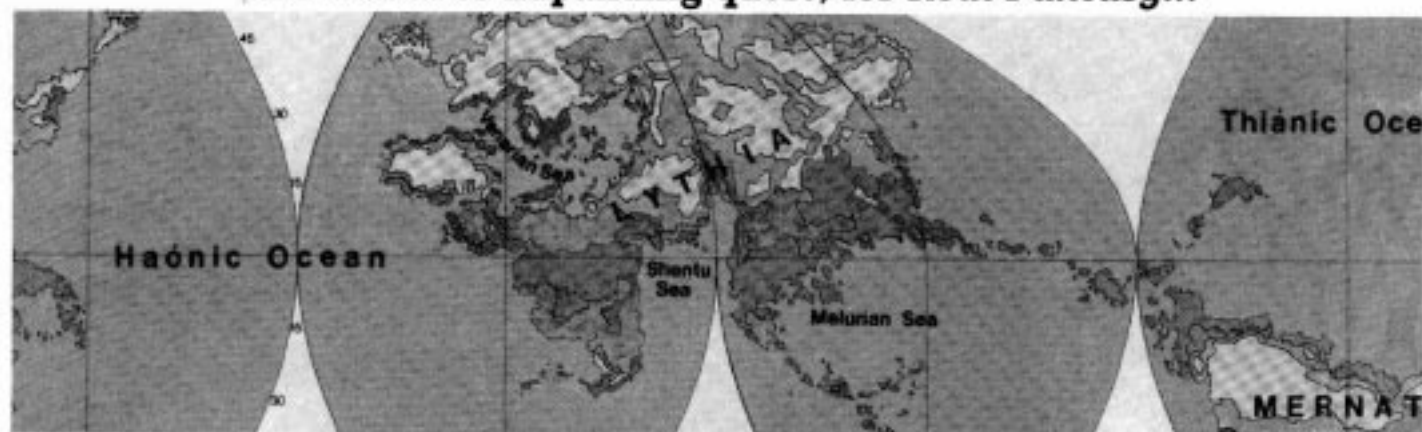
"No. There seems to be no hypercoil extract to be found. However, they have outstanding service, even if their customs are a bit odd." Telguin shifted his bulk in contentment. "The food is excellent. Can we make it to the next station?"

Gedran quivered with irritation. "Barely. We'll have to run the fold generators at half output. Are you sure there's no fuel available?"

"I'm sure. It's a nice world, with quality food. We ought to return someday, but there are no service stations. It's very backwater. All they have is rest stops." Ω



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More pages from the Arch-Mages

# Arcane Lore

by Scott Waterhouse

Artwork by Lynne Taylor

The battle raged across the plain beneath Astra's hill as legions of hollow-eyed corpses clashed and locked in battle with the human and elven armies of Sestar. The crashes and crescendos of shattering magicks mingled with the screams of dying mortals.

A clap of thunder rang out above the tumultuous cries of the battle as the Arch-Mage hurled another fiery spell at the walking dead, then another thunderclap roared—from elsewhere in the battle—and a lull in activity fell for a moment, the concussions stunning even the skeletal contingents. The melee quickly resumed with renewed fury, only to be interrupted again as two figures sprang into existence—one of light, the other dark—rising above the armies, dwarfing them. An angelic creature, nearly 50' high and garbed in blinding white, and a gaunt, grotesque monstrosity, twice as tall and robed in light-stifling darkness, took to the field and swiftly wielded their coruscating magicks. The armies at their feet, both living and dead, staggered back to give them room. "The Arcane Contention," whispered the old wizard in awe, his words lost in the fury of the ultimate magical engagement.

The following three magical works were created by powerful mages for use by the same. As a result, there are several points that the Dungeon Master should consider before these spell books are placed as treasure in a campaign.

The value of these books is, perhaps, only exceeded by the potential power they will give to PCs. Many of the spells in these books are of high level, and the DM should carefully consider the effect of allowing characters to get their hands, on these spells *before* they obtain the books. It is perfectly acceptable to omit one or more of the spells that are supposed to be in a book if deemed best for the campaign.

It should be obvious that many characters will want to get these books, as demonstrated by the history of the tomes. But it is quite possible that a PC's problems will only begin when he acquires such a book, for any use of a unique spell will attract

attention—perhaps much more than the spell-caster bargained for. Power is never free.

As the spells detailed herein are unique, not all details on their effects may be available to the characters, even within the books in which such spells are found. There is no need for the DM to reveal everything about a spell to the players. Let them find out themselves—the hard way, if necessary. That is where the fun lies.

Finally, the history of each volume may be adjusted to fit the nations, personalities, and circumstances of a DM's particular campaign world with little difficulty. Otherwise, the lands and personages referred to are assumed to lie outside the usual campaign area.

Two previous books of this sort appeared in DRAGON® issue #139, in "Bazaar of the Bizarre."



## Manor's Manual of Sight

**Appearance:** This book has no cover or spine, but consists rather of several plates of silver tied together with a cord woven from gold thread. Each sheet of silver is about 1½' long and 1' wide. The front and back sheets are blank and are much thicker than the middle sheets. There are no distinguishing symbols or markings on either cover.

**History and description:** *Manor's Manual of Sight* has an ancient but relatively well-known history, traceable from

many centuries back. The exact origin of the book is not precisely known, however, and it is acknowledged that either Manor "the Blind" or his apprentice, the elven lord Beltrin, could have fashioned the book. Manor is certainly the most likely author, for the theme of the work—vision—is in keeping with his personal interests. Manor was born blind, his eyes completely black in color, but he surmounted the odds and survived to become a powerful mage. Manor is probably most

After that, the *Manual of Sight* was stolen from the Silent School by the dark

The notes of the scholars of the Twilight elves, in addition to those of Iminthrese, provide full details about the magic found within the book. The script of the book is clean and flowing, perhaps showing that Beltrin wrote the book, not Manor, whose writing was somewhat stiff and difficult to read even after he gained his magical form of sight. The spells contained in the book are all in standard form, and each takes up one silver sheet. They are as follows: *clairvoyance*, *darksense* (unique spell), *infravision*, *Manor's mindsight* (unique spell), *Manor's mind vision* (unique spell), and *magic mirror*. The three unique spells in the *Manual of Sight* are detailed here.

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 120' C T: 4  
Duration: 1 hr./lvl. ST: None  
AE: Creature touched

The caster does not need to use any other sensory organs besides his mouth and ears (thus he cannot be gagged or have plugged ears if he is to use this spell);

The material components of the spell are two bats' ears and a small silver tuning fork, which must be rung audibly upon completion of the spells casting. Neither component is consumed by casting the spell. [*Compare this spell with the druid's spell bat sense, from "Arcane Lore," DRAGON issue #132.*]

Level: 5                      Components: V,S,M  
Range: Special              CT: 6  
Duration: 1 turn/lvl. ST: None  
AE: Creature touched

When using *Manor's mindsight*, a mage may not perceive illusions or phantasms for what they really are (unless his intelligence would normally allow him to distinguish between the illusion and reality), nor may he distinguish between magical objects and nonmagical items, or make distinctions of alignment. Similarly, the mage cannot see traps, tricks, pits, magical symbols, or other invisible or magically concealed items or objects, unless he would be able to detect such items normally. (For example, if an 15th-level mage with an intelligence of 17 has a 95% chance to detect an invisible being, as decreed by the 1st Edition DMG (page 60), he would be have the same chance to see invisible beings up to 90' away, regardless of barriers, with the *mindsight* spell.) A mage may also surmount the problem by casting spells such as *detect invisible*, *detect evil*, *detect magic*, etc. previous to the actual casting of *mindsight*. These spells may be used with *mindsight* even if the radius of such spells are not equal to the radius of the *mindsight* spell.

The mage may maintain the *mindsight*



spell without concentration, and may move, cast spells, and engage in other activities while *mindsight* is in effect. If the mage wishes to view anything through the spell, however, he must concentrate and is then unable to move, cast spells, or engage in any strenuous activities. If the mage is attacked while concentrating on the *mindsight*, the spell is not ruined and the caster may resume viewing after combat is resolved. The material component of the spell is the preserved eye of a blink dog, which is reusable.

### Manor's Mind Vision

(Alteration/Divination)

Level: 7

Components: V,S,M

Range: Special

CT: 8

Duration: 3 rds./lvl. ST: None

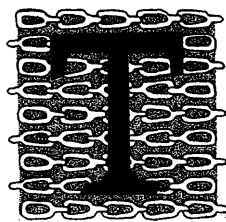
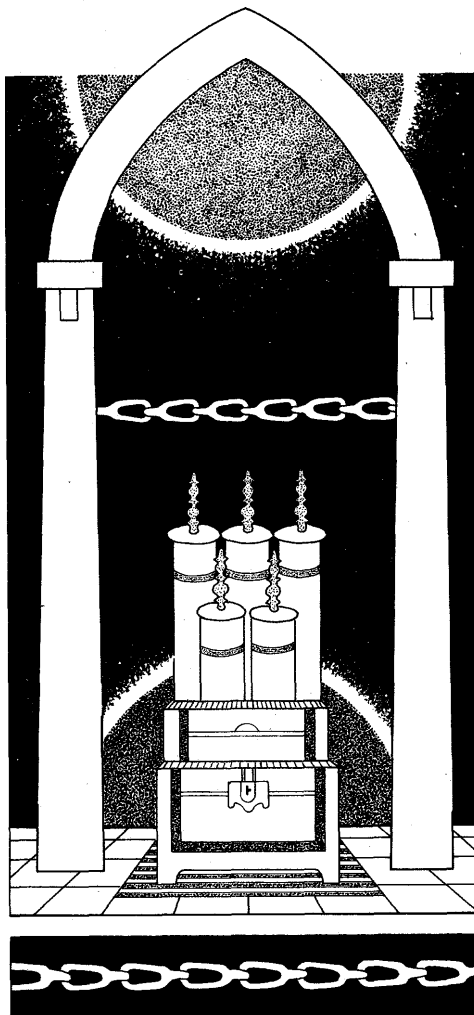
AE: Creature touched

*Manor's mind vision* is essentially a more powerful version of *Manor's mindsight*. It is subject to the same restrictions and bonuses, in terms of movement, combat, and concentration, as the *mindsight* spell, and has the same range (20' plus 10' per two levels of the caster). The *mind vision* spell also allows the caster to view all objects within the radius of the spell simultaneously, as the *mindsight* spell does. However, while using the *mind vision* spell, the mage may also view unlit areas as if they were brightly light. Furthermore, any illusions viewed will be apparent as such, and the true form of any item or object viewed can be easily determined. In addition, all invisible objects and creatures may be seen, and all *polymorphed* objects and creatures are seen as they truly are, with a hazy image superimposed showing their *polymorphed* form.

Any magical item viewed with a *mind vision* spell is recognized as such, as if the mage were seeing it while using a *detect* magic spell. Pits, traps, secret and concealed doors, symbols, magical traps, and so on are seen for what they are. Furthermore, the mage correctly perceives the alignment of any creature viewed by the aura it projects (barring the use of psionic disciplines). Finally, the mage may opt to forgo the ability to view dark areas as if they were lit, and may instead view them with either infravision or ultravision, though once a particular type of vision is chosen it may not be changed for the duration of the spell.

The mage does not need any functioning sensory organs for this spell to work, and he may in fact be blind, blindfolded, or even without eyes. The caster of the spell may view all objects within a line of sight that he would normally perceive, under existing light conditions and with his normal vision through the *mind vision*, while casting other spells or engaging in combat. If he wishes to view more distant areas or areas on the other side of solid barriers, concentration must be maintained. The material component of the spell is two eyes of a being originating on a plane other than the Prime Material plane, im-

mersed in a potion of *ESP* and a potion of *gaseous form*. The components of the spell are consumed upon its completion.



ymessul's  
Enchiridion  
of Travel

**Appearance:** This "tome" actually consists of five waxen papyrus scrolls, each tied shut with a ribbon of red silk. Each ribbon has a small black symbol woven into it, in the form of Tymessul's rune. Each scroll is quite long, nearly 10', and each bears, at the top in silvery ink, the name of the work (the *Enchiridion of Travel*) and the number of the scroll (one through five). The five scrolls are held in a light-green box of oiled wood, with a simple yet devious lock on the front. The box is unremarkable except for the fact that it has survived for nearly 350 years without apparent ill effects from age. The box has a jade rune set in the top—Tymessul's symbol when he was alive.

**History and description:** The rune of Tymessul "the Wanderer" on the box and each of the ribbons makes the origin of the work obvious to scholars of Shalomnese history. The *enchiridion's* origins are further substantiated in this respect by the fact that the work is written in the delicate spidery glyphs of a tongue used on the upper outer planes, for the Wanderer was the only resident of Tikkun Shalom to know this language at that time. The Wanderer did acknowledge a secondary source: Acheulea, an Arch-Mage from the para-elemental plane of Magma, who was a long-time associate of Tymessul and often accompanied Tymessul on his voyages to the outer planes.

Previous to his disappearance, Tymessul was renowned for his prolonged trips to the outer planes, for his founding of the alliance of Green Mages, and for the spells he had researched and perfected (some of which are written in the *Enchiridion*). Indeed, his castle, whose magical defenses remain unbreached to this day, is rumored to contain numerous powerful magical items and artifacts from the outer planes which he collected during the decades of his voyaging, and must also contain several previously unknown spells. Furthermore, although the exact date of origin of the work is unknown, it is evident that the Wanderer completed the scrolls at a time very near his disappearance, for the scrolls contain many powerful spells, none of which he is known to have used.

After Tymessul's official disappearance (which may have occurred at a much earlier date, but only became apparent when he failed to turn up for a meeting of the Green Mages), the *enchiridion* was examined by his colleagues, the Green Mages. The group is largely a neutral one, dedicated to the preservation of the natural order on the Prime Material plane, and the use of the combined magicks of mages and druids toward this end. Accordingly, the group worked closely with the Sorrow Sea druids in the southern part of Shalom, where the Green Mages are also located. It was in the joint library that the two groups maintain that the *Enchiridion of Travel* ended up, as did the rest of Tymessul's works, when his disappearance was acknowledged.

This work apparently remained in that library until it was loaned to the secretive monks of Saint Shastri, who wished to examine the documents for clues that might help them in their private battle against the demon Nuckalavee (this almost 350 years after Tymessul disappeared). While the monks were examining the first two scrolls and consulting with Ghulam, a Hierophant of the Cabal allied with the Sorrow Sea Druids, a ball of bright red light, 2' in diameter, appeared in the room, scooped up the scrolls and the box, and disappeared with them. The Green Mages quickly instituted a magical search for the scrolls, which failed to turn up anything. Ghulam later speculated that it was

Acheulea who abruptly took the scrolls to help his friend, but this theory must remain purely speculation, for neither Tymessul or Acheulea have been heard from in the intervening decade.

Fortunately, the contents of the work are well documented by several of the members of the Green Mages who had occasion to study the scrolls during the time they were in their library. The notes of the Green Mages clearly show that the scrolls contained in the work were of the type that Tymessul favored. The scrolls also contain most of his major researches, to which he devoted much time in order that he could continue the love of his life: traveling to ever more exotic locations. From their notes then, it is apparent that the first two scrolls were filled entirely with text on the methods of traveling to the outer planes and with various warnings and pieces of advice for planar travelers. The next two scrolls contain numerous spells used for traveling of all sorts, including all of the following, in standard form and written in Common: *astral spell*, *blink*, *dimension door*, *fly*, *gate*, *levitate*, *mount*, *succor*, *teleport*, *teleport without error*, and *Tymessul's cerulean traverse* (unique spell). The final scroll of the collection contains the spells that Tymessul found particularly useful during his travels, all of which are written in Common but are otherwise in standard form: *airy water anti-magic shell*, *fireball*, *Leomund's secure shelter*, *sink*, and *Tymessul's planar pacifier* (unique spell, apparently a gift from Acheulea).

The two unique spells described in the *Enchiridion of Travel* are as follows:

#### **Tymessul's Cerulean Traverse**

(Alteration/Enchantment)

Level: 9

Components: V,S,M

Range: Touch

CT: 3 rounds

Duration: 1 day/lvl. ST: None

AE: The caster plus special

When a mage invokes this powerful enchantment, he enables himself and a limited number of companions to journey through space and across planar boundaries. The caster may affect one companion for every six levels he possesses, in addition to himself (all fractions rounded down). For example, a 23rd-level mage could cast the spell upon himself and three companions.

Each recipient of the spell must hold hands with the caster for the entire time that the spell is being cast, or be a part of a circle that includes the recipients and the caster. Any interruption of the circle will ruin the spell. Once the dweomer is cast, the individuals affected by the spell may separate, though the recipients must rejoin in a circle if they wish to cross any planar boundaries. Although there is no saving throw against a *cerulean traverse*, it will not work on an unwilling or unconscious subject; if this is tried, the entire spell will be ruined for all involved.

The prime function of the *traverse* is to allow the mage and his companions to move to other planes, as if they had passed through a small, personalized *gate*. Each planar boundary that is crossed, through the power of the *traverse*, must be crossed by all the subjects of the spell in unison. Concentration must also be maintained for one round while the planar boundary is crossed. Each planar boundary so crossed reduces the duration of the spell by one day. Furthermore, while under the influence of this spell, no person may cross a planar boundary by any means other than the *traverse*, including *wish*, *gate*, a *well of the worlds*, or even through the presence of an artifact.

This spell grants certain lesser powers that may be utilized by the recipients, with no need to stay in a circle. These actions include the ability to fly, as per the mage spell *fly*, and the ability to enter into gaseous form at will (along with all equipment) and move thus at three times the normal movement rate. A person in gaseous form is extremely hard to damage, not being subject to most magical attack forms and virtually all physical attacks, but may not cross a magic circle or *anti-magic shell*.

The use of this spell in no way guarantees the safety of its users once they reach their destination, and will in no way protect them from any damage they may take during their journey or while they are on a foreign plane. The material components of the spell are a circular platinum chain large enough for all who are to be affected by the spell to grasp, which must cost a minimum of 10,000 gp for each person the spell-caster wishes to enchant, and at least 1,000 gp of powdered emerald for each subject, to be sprinkled in a circle enclosing the subjects. The chain is not consumed by the spell, but the powdered emerald is.

#### **Tymessul's Planar Pacifier**

(Alteration/Evocation)

Level: 9

Components: VM

Range: Touch

CT: 1 per object

Duration: 1 wk./lvl. ST: None

AE: 1 object per 6 levels of the caster

The casting of a *planar pacifier* by a mage enables some types of magical items to operate normally while being used on a foreign plane. The magical items a *planar pacifier* may affect include only those items that have "pluses" —e.g., swords, shields, armor, *rings* and *cloaks of protection* (but not *bracers of defense*), *luck-stones*, and so on. The protection extends across one planar boundary for every three levels of the mage casting the spell. While the objects so enchanted remain within this limit, they operate at their normal strength. Thus, a *shield* +4 taken to the first layer of the Nine Hells is still +4 in strength. However, once the object becomes farther removed than this from its plane of origin, it will lose one "plus" for each additional plane it crosses, over and above the limit imposed by the level of the caster. Thus, if an 18th-level wizard were to protect a *sword* +4, the sword would remain +4 on the Astral plane and on the first five layers of the Nine Hells; on the sixth layer, it would be reduced to +3; on the seventh, +2; the eighth, +1; and if taken to the ninth layer, it would lose all magical power as long as it remains there.

The spell-caster loses 1 hp for each item he protects with a *planar pacifier* investing this hit point as a bit of energy from the Prime Material plane which surrounds the object and simulates Prime Material plane conditions for the object. Furthermore, the mage may protect only half as many items as he has constitution points (even if he casts the *pacifier* multiple times). The mage may regain his lost hit points simply by touching the enspelled items within one day of the end of the dweomer. If the magic is dispelled or otherwise removed from the item (e.g., by means of *Mordenkainen's disjunction* or a *rod of cancellation*), the hit points are permanently lost and may be regained only by means of a *wish*. The *pacifier* cannot be removed by *dispel magic*, but more powerful magicks may dispel it.

Magical items from other planes may be protected in a similar manner, but only if the caster comes from the same plane as the item to be protected, or is able to expend a *wish* to enhance the *pacifier's* power (which will also make the *pacifier* permanent). In any case, the spell will work only if cast while on the item's plane of origin. The material components of this spell are a drop of the caster's blood and 5,000 gp worth of powdered diamond for each item to be protected. Both substances are consumed when the spell is cast.

## **Letters**

*Continued from page 5*

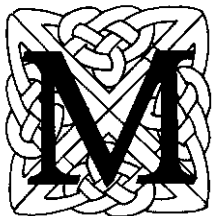
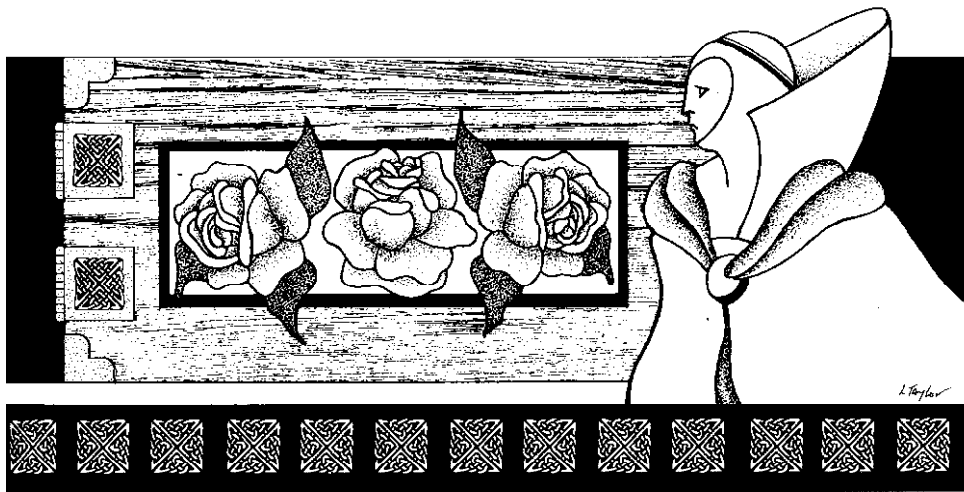
vampires, probably because my friends always talked me into being Dracula when we played vampire when I was a kid. I just want to mention that Anne Rice does not have the monopoly on undead psychology. *Sunglasses After Dark*, by Nancy Collins, is an amazing book in which a full range of demons, undead, and half-breeds is explored. If you could never imagine a "social vampire," read this book.

Eleanor Kincaid  
Berkeley CA

*When I was a kid, my friends always talked me into being either Godzilla or a Tyrannosaurus rex when we played. I love dinosaurs to this day, and it's rubbed off on my son. It's good to hear from someone else who has "a sort of sympathy" for a particular monster. I wonder what critters other readers have sympathies for. . . .*

Ω





## Mylsibis' Codex of Cotention

**Appearance:** The *Codex of Cotention* is a small magical volume, 6" long and 3" wide. Both covers and the spine of the book are fashioned from burnished and oiled shadow wood, which still possesses a dull gray shine despite the book's antiquity. On the inside is a spine made of leather, glued to the wooden spine, to which are sewn 28 pages of high quality vellum. The corners of the covers are reinforced by silver corner caps. Silver hinges attach the covers to the spine, and both covers are joined together on the right side by a silver clasp with a simple lock on it, which was broken the last time the book was examined. The symbol of Mylsibis (a red rose) has been scribed on the cover with crimson lacquer.

**History and description:** The *Codex of Cotention* was first mentioned in history when the elven sage Anfiel acknowledged its existence in his diary 82 years ago, after visiting the mage Mylsibis. Anfiel died shortly thereafter under mysterious circumstances. No other known record exists from that time that describes the book. Mylsibis seems to have shown it to no other, and none of her six apprentices ever mentioned seeing the text. Two years later, following the death of her friend Anfiel, Mylsibis journeyed north to fight a lich—Atropos, master of the mages of the Black Circle, and conjectured to be an avatar—who had reunited the forces of the Circle after several hundred years of inactivity. Mylsibis was convinced that Atropos was involved in the death of Anfiel, and she vowed to avenge her friends' death and bring down the much hated and feared Black Circle.

Mylsibis met the lich in a sorcerous battle, bested him in the previously unheard-of *Arcane Contention*, and scattered the remains of the alliance of evil

mages. She returned to her tower in Wraith Vale to heal from her wounds, but was surprised by the Shadowflight assassins of Urckene, hired by the remnants of the Black Circle, and she fell under their poisonous blades. The *Codex of Cotention* vanished after her death and was not among the works recorded by her apprentices as being in her library.

Three decades later, the work was apparently seen by the bard Vadour in the library of the oracle at Starfall, though the sighting was never verified. Vadour returned to "liberate" the book but could not find it. Twelve years after this, the book was found among other treasures in the lair of the red dragon Sthicyns, after the mighty worm was brought down by a dwarven war party from the Emerald Mountains assembled for that purpose. The dwarves apparently retained possession of the book for nearly a century, until recently when the dwarven king gave the book to the mysterious figure named the Mountain Mage (thought by some to be a dwarf) in return for his services in fashioning a new magical throne for the dwarf king. The Mountain Mage is believed to still possess the book.

The court magist of the dwarf king renders a complete description of the book, a copy of which was sent to the Sestarian Imperial University. The magist claims that the book set forth many great offensive incantations, seemingly all that Mylsibis knew. The book also apparently contained a scrap of papyrus upon which Mylsibis had hastily written down a new spell, *balance*, that she had just finished researching. The other spells were all set down in standard form, one per page, and included: *burning hands*, *Bigby's clenched fist*, *Bigby's crushing hand*, *Bigby's forceful hand*, *Bigby's grasping hand*, *Bigby's inter-*

*posing hand*, *chain lightning*, *cone of cold*, *cloudkill*, *crystalbrittle*, *delayed blast fireball*, *energy drain*, *eyebite*, *feeblemind*, *fireball*, *ice storm*, *incendiary cloud*, *lightning bolt*, *magic missile*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *Melf's minute meteors*, *meteor swarm*, *Mylsibis' arcane contention* (unique spell), *Otiluke's freezing sphere*, *power word blind*, *power word stun*, *ray of enfeeblement*, and *shocking grasp*.

The two unique spells found in Mylsibis' *Codex of Cotention* follow.

### Balance (Enchantment)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M  
Range: Touch CT: 2  
Duration: 2 rds./lvl. ST: None  
AE: 1 person

When a mage casts a *balance* spell, he enables a person to balance on one or both feet in a precarious position where that person would otherwise fall. Thus, the mage or a companion may walk a tightrope, cross a narrow or unstable ledge, or fight near the edge of a cliff without any fear of falling. Any unhindered balancing action requiring a dexterity check will automatically pass. This spell does not modify the recipient's armor class, fighting, missile bonuses, or climbing bonuses, though no penalties to these factors are taken from balancing. If other factors are introduced, such as being pushed, injured, or exposed to high winds, the recipient must make a dexterity check on 1d20, with a 20 indicating failure (otherwise, the recipient is assumed to simply move his body to recover from the force exerted on him). The material component of the spell is the hoof of a mountain goat, which is reusable.

### Mylsibis' Arcane Contention

(Enchantment, Evocation, Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 9 Components: V,S,M  
Range: 10'/level CT: Special  
Duration: Special ST: Special  
AE: Special

When a mage or pair of mages unleashes the spell of *arcane contention*, they enter into a magical duel of extreme efficacy and potentially catastrophic effects for the participants. The *arcane contention* creates twin phantasmal creatures of awesome size, controlled by the participants, which vie magically and physically to determine a victor. The spell has been used historically primarily as a means for settling disputes between powerful mages, and as a device to keep the devastating forces mages wield against each other limited in effect to the mages involved. At the same time, the *contention* will not significantly reduce the magical arsenal of the victor, and is also useful in its capacity to inspire awe or fear among any onlookers.

When the *contention* is initially entered, only one mage needs to have memorized the spell of *contention*, although both participants may do so. If only one mage

has memorized the spell, or if but one of the dueling mages undertakes to cast the spell, that mage must initially issue challenge to his opponent. The challenging mage must then cast the first part of the spell, including the challenge. A challenge may be issued to any mage within the range of the normal vision of the challenger (thus, items such as a *crystal ball* or *eyes of the eagle* may not be employed), regardless of intervening magical barriers or mundane obstacles that would otherwise prevent the opponent from hearing the challenge. The challenge may then be accepted or denied by the opponent.

If the challenge is accepted, the mage who is challenged to the *contention* must cast at least 10 spell levels of spells (e.g., one eighth-level spell and one second-level spell, or five second-level spells), or respond by casting an *arcane contention* spell himself. All of these spells are absorbed to power the contention, and none of their normal effects manifest in any way whatsoever. Once the mage has accepted the challenge, he must make all possible effort to cast the spells as soon as possible; if he delays, he will find himself *compelled* to cast the necessary levels of spells. When the mage who has been challenged completes the casting of the requisite spell levels, the *arcane contention* proper is joined.

If the opponent desires to deny the challenge, he must make a saving throw vs. spells to avoid being inadvertently drawn into the contention. If his saving throw is successful, he may ignore the challenge, and the spell will be lost from the challenger's mind. If he fails his saving throw, however, he is automatically drawn into the *contention* and is compelled to cast the necessary spell levels to power the *contention*. If two mages simultaneously cast *Mylsibis' arcane contention*, or if one mage casts the *spell* in response to another's challenge (instead of casting 10 levels of spells), then no saving throw applies for either mage, and the *contention* must be joined without further delay.

Once the *arcane contention* proper begins, both mages become immobile and absolutely vulnerable. Thus, although the honor of most creatures will prevent them from attacking the vulnerable mage (much as they would not throw an axe at the back of a dueling fighter), it is best for a mage to be in a friendly territory when the *contention* begins or to have prepared some form of magical defense. As the duel begins, each mage must choose a monster type to represent him in the battle. Any monster may be chosen, but it must be a monster that the mage has observed before or has read or heard about in detail. The monster cannot be one that the mage has only heard about in passing or from legend. The monster does not need to be of the same alignment as the mage, but it cannot be a unique being or specific individual. Once both mages have selected their "champion monster," an insubstantial

phantasm (apparently "real" to observers) of each monster forms, at 10 times the creature's normal size (which affects apparent size, number of hit dice, and other applicable factors by a factor of 10, except damage per attack, which is but three times normal). Hit points are rolled for the monsters, and 2 hp are added to each monster's total for each level of the controlling mage.

Each champion monster that is created has several abilities it may use during the *contention*. Primary among these is the ability to cast spells as the mage controlling it can, with the actual type and level of spells available to the champion corresponding to those currently memorized by the mage controlling it (material spell components are not needed, and the monsters may not learn *Mylsibis' arcane contention*). The magical monsters are in all other respects identical to the stock from which they are envisioned, including aspects such as special abilities, resistances, intelligence, immunities, and so on, and hence may draw on these often considerable powers during the combat. Fortunately, the magical monsters may damage only each other, whether the damage is caused by weapons, natural weaponry, or spells, and may take damage from only another phantasmal monster created by an *arcane contention* spell.

The champion monsters proceed to do battle with each other, under the direction of the controlling mages, who select which type of attack the monsters will make and the spells they will cast. All movements, to-hit rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, etc., are made exactly as they would be for a normal battle. During the battle, each mage must maintain his concentration, or control of his monster will be lost during the interruption. If "uncontrolled," a monster may attack only physically (i.e., it cannot employ spells unless the mage maintains concentration).

Each monster may not attempt to end the battle prematurely by using spells or physical movement to leave, and may not willingly move out of sight of the opponent or either of the controlling mages. The battle is concluded when one monster dies as a result of damage accrued from the other monster.

The efficacy of the monsters is not totally predetermined by the conditions mentioned, and each mage may affect the condition or effectiveness of his phantasm in one of several ways, though at considerable loss to himself in many cases. The hit-point total of the monsters may be increased by channeling hit points from the controlling mage to the phantasm, at a direct one-to-one ratio, for hit points gained per hit points lost. Also, the damage caused by spells or other attacks cast by the phantasms may be increased in strength if the mage is willing to suffer a loss of ability-score points. The mage may use all of his ability scores for this purpose; every point so sacrificed increases

the damage of the attack by 1 hp. Lost ability-score points are regained at the rate of one every two rounds for each ability below normal. This loss of ability points is only illusory, but no score may be reduced below zero; if any score is at zero at the end of the battle, the mage will die.

Additionally, the mages involved may also influence the monsters by expending charges from any magical items they possess. Each charge so used may increase the monster's hit-point total by 1 hp, or increase the amount of damage done in an attack by 1 hp. Any healing that the mage receives during the *contention* may optionally be applied to his champion, with the exception of a *heal* spell. Magical healing so received by the monster becomes ineffective once more than twice the monster's original number of hit points has been received in total.

For example: A mage with 56 hp wishes to increase the hit-point total of his monster (which currently has 200 hp) by 40 hp. The mage's new total will be 16 hp, and the monster's new total will be 240. The mage also has a strength of 16 and a constitution of 17. If the champion monster is directed to cast a *fireball* spell that would normally do 67 hp damage, the mage may opt to reduce both his strength and constitution scores by 10 to 6 and 7, respectively, and have the monster cause 87 hp damage to its opponent (saving throw applicable). Much later, the monster is severely wounded and has but 42 hp remaining. The mage drinks a potion of *extra-healing* and opts to use half of the 20 hp he gains to heal himself, bringing his total up to 26 hp, and the monster's hit-point total up to 52.

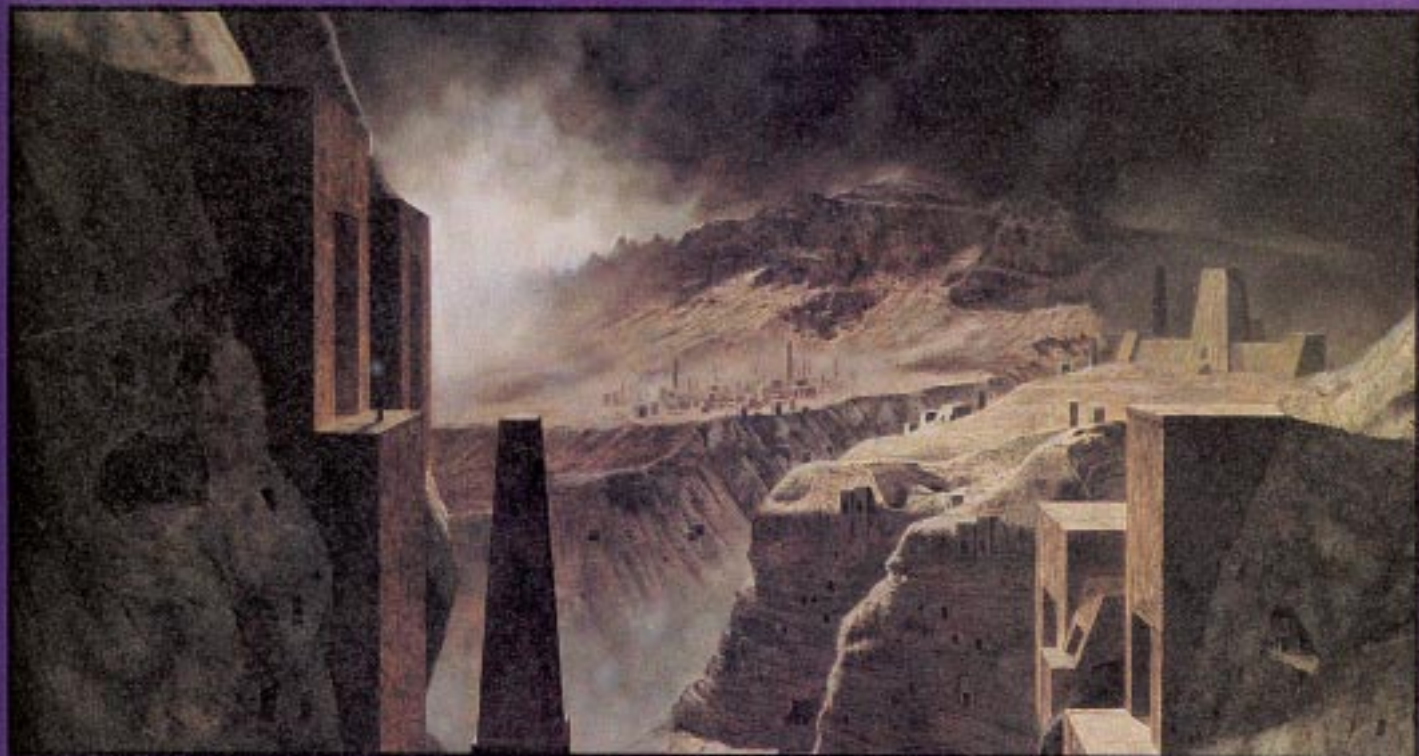
When the battle is concluded, both phantasms vanish, and the mage whose champion has lost the battle (i.e., is the first monster to die) takes damage equal to one-tenth of the total number of hit points in damage his champion suffered (no saving throw), and loses from memory all the spells his champion cast during the battle. The victor of the *arcane contention* loses one-twentieth of the total hit-point damage his champion suffered, but does not lose any spells from his memory (besides *Mylsibis' arcane contention*, of course). The victor also gains experience points equal to half the experience-point value of the vanquished mage. Additionally, enemies of the victor under 2 HD who viewed the battle must make morale checks or suffer from the effects of a *fear* spell, and those of 2-4 HD must make saving throws vs. spells or suffer from the effects of a *scare* spell. All those friendly to the victor gain a bonus of +1 on their next morale check, applied during a BATTLESYSTEM™ supplement or D&D Companion Set "War Machine" battle. ♪



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# SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom. We are no longer able to make personal replies; please send no SASEs with your questions (old SASEs are being returned with writers' guidelines for the magazine).

This month, the sage considers a few problems that have stymied AD&D® game referees and players. All page references herein refer to the AD&D 2nd Edition volumes.

## **In what order do the volume of the *Monstrous Compendium* go?**

In any order you want. Volumes I and II contain "basic" monsters, ones you'd find in just about any campaign. The remaining volumes contain creatures that are primarily associated with specific settings, such as the *WORLD OF GREYHAWK®* campaign or the *Oriental Adventures* lands. Some or all the monsters in these volumes might be found in other settings. The *Monstrous Compendium's* loose-leaf format is intended to allow DMs to organize the creatures in any way they see fit.

## **What happens to characters who are thrown into a state of shock because of some ghastly happening? How would you use ability checks or saving throws to determine if a character would be subject to such a state in the first place?**

This is up to the DM. The simplest way to handle this would be to have the affected character save vs. paralysis, adjusted for wisdom. The effects of a failed save would vary with the situation, but the morale rules in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pages 69-72) should give you a few ideas. The *RAVENLOFT™* boxed set (TSR product #1053) contains complete rules for dealing with fear and horror; see chapter 4 of the *RAVENLOFT* booklet.

## **In the *RAVENLOFT* adventure *RA1 Feast of Goblins*, the scale on the *Harmonia* map is listed as 1" equals 250 miles, making a trip from one side of town to the other a long journey indeed. Likewise, the detail maps of *Homlack* and *Skald* are scaled at 125 miles per inch and 300 miles per inch, respectively. What are the real scales?**

The scales for each map should be measured in *feet*, not miles.

## **Would a *ring of free action* negate thieving penalties for wearing heavy armor? Would it allow a wizard to cast spells while wearing armor? Would it allow an armored character to move at full (12) rate? Can the wearer swim?**

A *ring of free action* protects its wearer from magical effects that hinder or immobilize, and allows the wearer to function underwater without hindrance due to water resistance. It does not negate encumbrance penalties, nor does it allow characters to ignore armor restrictions due to character class (not even thieves). It is important to note that magic in the AD&D game is specific and specialized; collateral effects, even those suggested by logic, usually do not occur. While a character wearing a *ring of free action* can ignore the effects of an *entangle* spell, the wearer is not granted the ability to freely move through underbrush as can a druid. Likewise, there is no reason to assume that the wearer cannot float or swim in water. (On the other hand, individual DMs might rule that this is the case, and thus give the character a new problem to think about while adventuring in or near the water.) The wearer of a *ring of free action* would be immune to attacks from a *rope of entanglement*, but could be physically restrained and bound with any normal rope. Note that the ring also does not empower the wearer to ignore barriers such as normal walls or a *forcecage* spell.

## **Is there a limit to the thickness and strength of the welds or rivets a *knock* spell can break? Could the spell break a welded link of a massive chain holding up a bridge?**

## **Could it pop a rivet out of a battleship?**

A *knock* spell cannot do either of the things you have described. The spell opens closures; it does not destroy structures. If a closure that can be opened by a *knock* spell (doors, lids; shackles, etc.) is sealed with a weld or rivet, the spell will break the weld or rivet, provided that the closure is not larger than the spell's area of effect. For example, a pair of handcuffs riveted shut *will* pop open when *knocked*. Note that the spell description (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 143) does not specifically mention rivets, but these should not be allowed to provide an easy way around *knock* spells. However, a single rivet is one "means of preventing egress." A single *knock* spell pops two rivets sealing an opening.

## **Does a dual-classed character receive a new set of initial proficiencies when switching to a new class?**

This is up to the DM, but I suggest not. A character's initial proficiencies reflect what he has learned during his nonadventuring career. Switching to a new class does not bring about a fresh wave of knowledge. Also, since the rules allow a character to switch classes multiple times if he qualifies (see the *PHB*, page 45), you will begin to encounter game balance problems as characters gain multiple "loads" of initial proficiencies. Dual-classed characters do, however, have to learn a new way of doing things when embarking on a new class, and should be given at least one new weapon proficiency (and one nonweapon proficiency if the campaign uses them) when starting the new class. Otherwise, the character is quite likely to be miserably unprepared to pursue his new vocation.

## **I've heard rumors of a *Harpers Trilogy* as part of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS™* book series. What do you know about it?**

There will indeed be a *Harpers* series, with at least three books. The first book, *Parched Sea* by Troy Denning, will be released in July 1991; the second book, *Elf Shadow* by Elaine Cunningham, is scheduled for October 1991; and the third book, *Red Magic* by Jean Rabe, is scheduled for November 1991.

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# Role-playing Reviews

## Exploring new gaming dimensions

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The choices of role-playing game backgrounds were once restricted to fantasy and science fiction. Over the years, new backgrounds appeared until it became possible to play almost any setting imaginable. SJG's GURPS\* game was designed to allow game masters and player characters to adventure in any role-playing setting using the same set of rules. The basic systems of the GURPS game have proven to be very adaptable to a wide variety of gaming worlds, as shown by the many campaign supplements ("worldbooks") available. With the GURPS game, it's possible to have horror role-playing one week and costumed super heroes the next.

Other game designers have taken a different approach when it comes to creating their game worlds. FASA's SHADOW-RUN\* game has successfully blended the grim world of cyberpunk with fantasy races and magic. GDW's SPACE 1889\* system took Victorian Europe and mixed it with spaceships and steam-age technology to create a setting in which adventurers could explore the worlds of Mars and Venus. TSR's SPELLJAMMER™ supplement expanded the AD&D® game by making space travel and alien worlds part of that game's universe. These different approaches have a lot to recommend them, and have expanded the boundaries of role-playing by making new experiences available to players and GMs.

This month, we take a look at two games that further expand the options and settings available. West End Games' TORC\* game sets out to create a system and background that facilitates and encourages characters to move between genres. And Palladium Books' RIFTS\* game blends elements of horror, science-fiction, and fantasy into a satisfying future Earth setting.

### TORC\* game

Cross-genre role-playing game  
West End Games \$30.00  
144-page perfect-bound rulebook, 80-page worldbook, 48-page adventure book, 16-page newsletter, deck of 156 cards, and 1d20

Design: Greg Gorden

Additional design: Douglas Kaufman, Bill Slavicsek, Chris Kubasik, Ray Winninger, Paul Murphy, Jonatha Ariadne Caspian, Michael Stern

Editing: Douglas Kaufman, Bill Slavicsek, Paul Murphy

Cover illustration: Daniel Horne

Interior illustrations: Timothy Bradstreet, Bob Dvorak, Rick Harris, Francis Mao, Alan Jude Summa, Valerie Valusek, Tim Wright, Paul Jaquays

**Background:** It's Earth, 1990, but it's not Earth as we know it. Powerful beings from beyond time and space, known as High Lords, have invaded our world and altered reality to suit their own nefarious purposes. Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia have been changed into a fantasy reality; France has fallen beneath the sway of the Cyberpope and his Inquisitors; North America has been invaded by dinosaur-riding lizardmen; Japan has come under the influence of the Kanawa Corporation; Indonesia is now home to demons, ghouls, and other denizens of a horror realm; and Egypt has been transformed into a pulp-fiction reality, complete with ancient Egyptian deities.

Millions of people now live under the laws of these widely differing realities. Many were transformed to match their new worlds; even more died when these worlds exploded onto the Earth. A few transcended the titanic changes occurring around them and became Storm Knights: characters capable of defending the Earth and even challenging the High Lords. These are the PCs of the MRG game.

Possibility energy is the key to the TORC game. The High Lords seek to take as much of it as they can from the Earth and its inhabitants; eventually, they'll leave a dead and barren world behind. Storm Knights thrive on possibility energy: They use it to perform heroic feats, negate damage, and improve their powers. So what is it? Simply put, possibility energy (measured in "possibilities") allows the





limits of reality to be expanded or changed in extraordinary ways. With it, characters can perform incredible actions and emerge unscathed from dangers that would kill lesser mortals.

The High Lords seek to expand the lands under their control to gain more possibility energy from the inhabitants. But the High Lords are far from united. Each strives to seize as much possibility energy as he can and use it to make himself the Torg, a godlike figure with unlimited powers. Earth is rich in the possibility energy needed to achieve this goal, but containing and using it has been a major problem for the High Lords. None is powerful enough to do so alone, so they constantly vie with one another to become the all-powerful Torg.

**Character generation:** Character design is quick and straightforward. Twenty-four character templates are provided in the game, and more have appeared in two supplements (see "Short and sweet"). The characters are drawn mainly from Earth, but some are from the worlds of the High Lords. Getting a template ready for action requires the spending of skill points and figuring out how the various characters know each other. Remember to note that you have 10 "possibilities" on the top of the sheet, and your character is ready to go.

Rules are also provided for how to design templates from scratch, allowing GMs and players to design specific character types. Here again, this is a relatively simple and quick operation.

**Game mechanics:** The TORG game is heroic in nature and contains some innovative and neat features, notably the Drama Deck (more on that later) and rules for performing multiple actions.

The basic system is simple enough, but it takes a bit of getting used to. To perform an action, roll 1d20, check the result on the bonus line (printed at the bottom of the character sheet), and apply the number to the relevant skill value. Modifiers vary from -12 to +13 or higher. A low roll usually results in failure; high rolls can be spectacular successes. If a PC rolls a 10 or a 20, he gets to roll again and add the result to his first roll; he then continues rolling as long as he keeps rolling 10s or 20s. The final total is then checked against the bonus line to find the bonus number. But rolling high numbers is not all from luck; a player can also spend a "possibility" on any roll. This gives him an additional roll of the 1d20, with a roll of 1-9 counting as a 10.

At first, having to check the bonus line feels odd, but the payoffs in the open-ended nature of the system are well worth the initial teething troubles. In the TORG game, heroes can valiantly hold off hordes of attackers, perform dramatic actions, and generally enjoy themselves in the tradition of heroic fiction and movies. But, there is a drawback to all this open-ended fast action: Possibilities are also used as

experience points to increase skills, buy new ones, and improve attributes. Players have to balance burning possibilities during the course of a game with the need to later use possibilities for character progression.

The open-ended nature of the TORG game allows widely varying technological levels to be included in an easy and convincing manner. The game's logarithm-based attribute scale is used to measure time, distance, weight, strength, etc. Switching between the attribute scale and real-world values requires some chart checking, but the benefits gained far outweigh the effort. Using this scale, it is possible to determine the damage caused by a dagger as well as that of an orbital laser system, without having to deal with ridiculously large numbers.

Magical and clerical abilities are also neatly handled and fit into the system with a minimum of fuss. As part of the multi-genre experience, fantasy wizards rub shoulders with modern-day Catholic priests and wired cyberpunks.

The TORG game system is also slick in its mechanics for allowing characters to perform multiple actions and for allowing the GM to easily handle the actions of large numbers of NPCs with only one die roll. Both of these require some chart checking, but (as noted elsewhere) the time it takes to check a chart is more than offset by the benefits gained. With these rules, a heroine can swing over a bottomless pit, fire her submachine gun at the goons on the other side, snatch up a helpless male prisoner, and swing back to safety. Similarly, 20 bad guys firing at the heroes can be broken down into four groups of five, or two groups of 10, etc., with one roll made for each group. The bad guys combine their chances of hitting and gain a commensurate increase in damage inflicted if their attack succeeds. This avoids the need for GMs to roll endless numbers of dice while the players twiddle their thumbs.

**Drama Deck:** This deck of 156 cards is used for a wide variety of purposes. It determines initiative, adds setbacks and surprises for PCs and NPCs alike, lets the players alter die rolls, allows players to affect the way an adventure's story develops, and also confuses the hell out of people at first. The cards basically work well, but it takes time to get used to them.

The various rules for getting the Drama Deck into play and what to do with the cards once they are played means that extensive rulebook flipping is in order the first few times the cards are used. Once players settle into the game's mechanics and become more comfortable with what the cards do, the cards fit neatly into and enhance the flow of the game.

It is quite possible to play the TORG game without using the cards, but players and GMs will be cutting down on their options by doing so. With these cards, a PC can perform spectacular stunts, fall in

love with an NPC, escape from hopeless situations, be mistaken for someone else, have an arch-enemy appear, and participate in other standard plot staples of pulp and heroic fiction. The advantages to the GM are that the cards set the tone for each round of combat by determining initiative, giving round-by-round bonuses or penalties, and making each round more than just a simple "shoot them dead" exercise.

**Crossing genres:** Okay, we've got a system that lets you move between genres and actively encourages characters from different backgrounds to adventure together. So how does it all work? Each of the seven genres (including unaltered Earth) are defined by axioms that determine their levels of technology, magic, spiritual power, and social systems. The axioms determine how easy it is to use various abilities, items, and equipment in each genre. If a genre does not support high-tech equipment, a character using a laser pistol might create a contradiction and disconnect from his own reality. If a character is disconnected, he becomes limited by the genre's axioms until the character succeeds in reconnecting with his own reality's axioms. The mechanics for this are integrated into the game's basic systems and come into effect only on very low rolls of the die. This makes adventuring in a different genre than one's own fraught with danger for the characters, but avoids the need to resort to complicated game mechanics to handle it.

The TORG game is also suited to adventuring in only one genre. Because the basic system is so adaptable, it is quite possible to base all the adventures in the pulp reality of the Nile Empire or the distorted cyberpunk theocracy of the Cyberpapacy. Characters need never leave their own genre if the players and GM desire. This makes the TORG game a strong contender as a multisystem role-playing game, much like the GURPS game. Where the TORG game scores is in its heroic background and systems, and in the way that different genres can be visited in a single game session.

**Worldbook:** So far, we've looked at only the main rulebook. The Worldbook contains basic information on the course of the invasions and on each of the genres involved. The genre-specific information is necessarily sketchy; each genre is scheduled to be more fully described and developed in a supplementary sourcebook. For now, only a brief appetizer for each realm is provided. To fully exploit the potential of each genre, the GM must purchase the various supplements or do his own extensive development.

**Adventure Book:** Here we get to see how the designers think a TORG game session should be run, as well as see handy tips on to be a good GM. It also includes a combat-heavy introductory adventure that fakes the PCs into three different genres. As a piece of heroic

fiction, the adventure plays well provided that players willingly follow the simple linear plot.

**Infiniverse:** Finally, we have issue one of the *Infiniverse* newsletter, which contains various adventure ideas, NPC characters, and new creatures. West End Games hopes that GMs. and players will subscribe to future issues of the newsletter (\$25 for 12 issues) and also send in information on how their various adventures go. West End Games plans to use this information to determine the future course of the Possibility Wars. How much impact individual gaming groups are going to have on the company's campaign remains to be seen.

**Presentation:** The game's presentation varies; 'some places are very clear, but re-readings are needed to grasp to what is being said in other areas. The artwork is also variable, with some fine illustrations and some very questionable ones, particularly where small artwork has been blown up to fill entire pages. However, considering the amount of material contained in the box, the graphic presentation is adequate.

**Evaluation:** The TORG game is a major addition to the role-playing games currently available. Its systems are simple enough to pick up quickly. Its adaptability to a variety of settings and genres makes it useful to those who wish to travel from genre to genre, and for those who prefer to keep settings separate and distinct while still running campaigns in a variety of different backgrounds.

Whether West End Games' strategy of producing a game that encourages cross-genre role-playing appeals to you or not, the TORG game is high in game values and playability. With the TORG game, you can set campaigns anywhere you like, confident that the game's mechanics can handle the various backgrounds.

Comparisons between the GURPS and TORG games spring readily to mind. The GURPS game sets out to be flexible and based within the bounds of human abilities. Characters in GURPS games perform as they do in the real world; death can come easily. The TORG game creates and encourages larger-than-life heroes that can take on all comers and still manage to win. Both games are readily adaptable to an immense variety of settings. Which one is the best for players and GMs really depends on whether you're a fan of realism or heroic adventure. The GURPS game gives you human characters; the TORG game gives you heroes capable of performing impressive feats and shrugging off large amounts of damage. The TORG game actively encourages you so mix genres; to date, the GURPS games has tended to keep its settings individual and distinct.

The TORG game and its supplements are available from: West End Games, RD 3, Box 2345, Honesdale PA 18431, U.S.A.

#### RIFTS™ game

Multigenre role-playing game

Palladium Books \$24.95  
256-page perfect-bound book, including 16 pages of full-color plates  
*Design:* Kevin Siembieda  
*Editing:* Alex Marciniszyn, Thorn Bartold  
*Cover illustration:* Keith Parkinson  
*Interior illustrations:* Kevin Long, Keith Parkinson, Adam Siembieda, Kevin Siembieda, Larry McDougall

**Background:** The RIFTS game is set against a future history of Earth in which a nuclear holocaust brought changes that no one could have anticipated. The deaths of billions of people released vast amounts of psychic energy, which sped down the ley lines that criss-crossed the Earth. Where the ley lines crossed each other, the energy tore through the fabric of space and time to create rifts: openings to other realities that released more energy, which further added to the destruction of civilization.

With the advent of these tremendous changes, the power of magic increased dramatically, as did inherent psionic energies. Demons and beings from other dimensions entered the Earth to prey on its helpless inhabitants; other such beings came looking to find worshipers to use as pawns in demonical schemes.

Technology was not totally destroyed in the holocaust. Developments in bionics and cybernetic enhancements continued to be developed and refined in the blasted landscape of future Earth. The result is a world where practitioners of magic and technology co-exist in a nightmarish future reality.

New powers have arisen from the ashes of the old world. The most prominent are the Coalition States, ruled by the militaristic Emperor, Karl Prosek. The Coalition States' outlook is determinedly dictatorial, anti-magic, and anti-psionic. It possesses large amounts of high-tech equipment, including giant robots and powered combat armor. Ranged against it are numerous smaller states that seek to preserve their independence, and many that actively encourage magical and psionic research. It is a time of struggles against tyranny and demonic creatures. It makes for an intriguing world, where various genres coexist in a plausible and imaginative setting.

**Game mechanics:** The RIFTS game uses Palladium Books' tried and tested game system, one that owes a lot to the established veterans of the gaming world: the AD&D and D&D® games. Characters are rated by levels of experience, with each new level bringing increased numbers of hit points, enhanced combat abilities, and improvements in character skills.

Skills are rated on a percentile system, but combat is governed by the roll of 20-sided dice. Consequently, instead of rolling the skill or less on percentile dice as with other skills, combat skills are in the form of adds that are used to increase the roll of 1d20 to see whether a hit is scored.

The system works reasonably well but lacks the smooth integration of game mechanics found in the TORG and GURPS games. The combat system is two-tiered, with two types of damage and protection being covered by the game. The first is called Structural Damage Capacity and refers to the kinds of damage caused by knives and firearms. Hit points are rated on this scale. The other is Mega-Damage: the kind of damage that high-tech weapons such as rail guns deal out. One Mega-Damage point equals 100 Structural Damage points. This means that characters armed with Structural Damage weapons have no real chance of damaging anything protected by Mega-Damage armor. Conversely, one hit from a Mega-Damage weapon is going to destroy anyone not wearing armor capable of dealing with this kind of attack. It all adds up to two different ways of assessing combat damage.

I also found reading and understanding the system to be hard work. The ordering of information is confused and assumes, at first, more knowledge of the background than is provided in the opening sections. The widespread use of two- or three-letter abbreviations for skills and abilities made it difficult to follow the explanations of the game mechanics without constant page-turning to find out what they meant. In places, the system's mechanics are presented in a confused manner. It took me quite a few re-readings before I was able to grasp how combat was structured and how the various systems fitted together.

The game is aimed at experienced role-players, who are presumably able and willing to put in the effort needed. I don't have any prior experience with previous games from Palladium Books, so it's possible that their established audience will have no problems with the presentation: They are going to know what they are getting and need only the changes from other games pointed out to them. The rest of us have to be prepared to work out what is going-on and how to apply it in our games. Even so, the system does work and fuses magic, psionics, and high-technology together.

**Character generation:** Twenty-eight character classes are available to players. The background descriptions are colorful and informative, making it easy for players to take on these roles. Additional game rules for each character are provided to make them distinct and to explain their special abilities.

The characters are imaginative and look like they would be fun to play. I particularly liked the Techno-Wizard, who uses magic to create and power technological devices, and the Line Walker, who uses ley-line energy to power and enhance his magical abilities. Another character of note is the Juicer, who is so hyped up on drugs that he performs in a superhuman manner but who is destined to burn himself out in about six years unless he can

kick his addiction. Other characters include: more standard wizards; Mind Melters (psionics users); Coalition soldiers in power armor; Dog Pack mutants, who smell out psionics users; various lowlives; Cyber Knights, who wander the land protecting the weak and the innocent from oppression; and very young Dragons. Palladium Books plans to present additional character classes in future supplements; among these will be more mutants, some beings that have come through the rifts, and more human characters.

Character attributes are rolled using 3d6, with bonuses available for characters with high ability scores. Certain character classes further increase attributes, but there is no real way of balancing out poor rolls, short of throwing the character away and rolling a new one. Once the basic attributes are generated, a player then chooses his character class and notes equipment, starting skills, and initial hit points.

The characters are more powerful than most citizens, who lack Mega-Damage weapons and armor. However, given the destructive capabilities of Mega-Damage weaponry, the system does not promote heroic role-playing. Thought and careful planning are more often going to be the key to survival, rather than reliance on hardware and magic.

**GM support:** The RIFTS game offers little in this department other than stating that it is not a game for novices. The assumption is that if you're an experienced GM, all you need are some tables for generating monsters quickly and a few NPC stats. Personally, I would have liked to see how the designer envisaged RIFTS games being played, as well as seeing a few pointers on how to start a campaign. Also, no introductory adventure is contained in the rulebook, so until Palladium Books publishes them, GMs will have to work up their own.

**Presentation:** The graphic design of the RIFTS game is appealing, with the color plates being used to good effect to show the world and its inhabitants. The majority of black-and-white illustrations are equally evocative, but a few are below standard. Graphically, it is an appealing package, but the overall presentation is very much let down by the ordering of the text.

**Evaluation:** Palladium Books appears to be committed to supporting and expanding the RIFTS game world. New supplements are in preparation to add additional background and to flesh out areas only briefly touched on in the rulebook. Its strengths lie in its bleak yet colorful setting, where magic is combined with psionics and high-tech equipment and weapons. Its game system is workable but less impressive than its setting. Given the success of FASA's SHADOWRUN game, which uses a similar combination of future history and magic, the RIFTS game may well sustain its initial popularity. More attention to the presentation of the basic

system and more GM support would go a long way to making the RIFTS game more accessible, however.

The RIFTS game and its supplements are available from: Palladium Books, 5926 Lonyo, Detroit MI 48210, U.S.A.

### Short and sweet

*The Living Land* (a TORG game supplement), by Christopher Kubasik. West End Games, \$18.00. This 128-page, perfect-bound book is the first sourcebook for the TORG game, and deals with the primitive reality imposed in parts of the United States and Canada by the lizardman High Lord, Baruk Kaah. It describes the course of the invasion and the effects it has had on North America, along with depicting life in the Living Land. The religion of the Edeinos lizardmen is covered in detail, along with game rules specifically for use within the Living Land.

Although well written, the setting comes across as a limited one. After getting lost in the deep mist of the Living Land a few times and fighting rampaging lizardmen, its possibilities for adventure come across as fairly narrow.

*The Nile Empire* (a TORG game supplement), by Ray Winninger. West End Games, \$18.00. Fans of pulp adventure and the *Indiana Jones* movies will find this supplement very much to their tastes. Within its 128 pages are descriptions of the 1930s reality of the Nile Empire and the schemes of the mad Pharaoh, Dr. Mobius. In keeping with the setting, new pulp hero powers are introduced, along with ways of designing weird science gizmos (high-tech equipment built by bending the laws of science, rather than following them).

The range of adventures is also far larger than in *The Living Land*. Characters can wander the streets of Cairo or enter the surrounding deserts, seeking to thwart the schemes of Dr. Mobius and his unscrupulous henchmen.

**FAMILY BUSINESS\*** game. Mayfair Games, Inc., \$12.50. This fast-paced card game of mob violence is an ideal ending to an evening of role-playing when the adventure is finished but it's too early to go home. Deal out the cards and start putting contracts out on each others' mobsters. The winner, in this game for 2-6 players, is the last one to have a mobster remaining in the game (i.e., alive). With most games lasting 20 minutes, it's fast, fun, and simple enough to pick up quickly.

This game is available from Mayfair Games Inc., P.O. Box 48539, Niles IL 60648, U.S.A. Ω

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## People unknown and places unheard of

by Marlys Heeszal

Welcome to a brief tour of people unknown, places unheard of, and probabilities unexplored. TSR™ Books presents six new novels for 1991, each a distinctive journey made possible only through the world of the imagination.

*Web of Futures* (February) is TSR Books' first offering for 1991. Written by Jefferson P. Swycaffer, author of *Warsprite* (a 1990 TSR release), *Web of Futures* tells the story of Maddock O'Shaughnessy—born liar, tavern-goer, and idle fisherman—who has been mysteriously chosen for a special mission: to save men's lives, to collect their souls, and to roam the future.

Swycaffer has nine published novels to his credit. A man who seldom is at a loss for something to do, he has read well over 2,000 science-fiction and fantasy books. When not reading, writing (to pen-pals in 40 states and six foreign countries), and participating in his science-fiction club, S.T.A.R. San Diego, Swycaffer works as a computer operator. He also participates heavily in fanzines and is a mathematics student at San Diego State University. Swycaffer says, "*Web of Futures* is a 'displaced person' novel. . . . The protagonist falls into a hole and wakes up in the future. Rip Van Winkle in the cyberpunk era. It isn't really a cyberpunk novel, of course. It's about people relating to people more than it is about people relating to machines. Anyone looking at the future, though, can't help but see that machines will be important:

From *Web of Futures*, we do a little time travel of our own, from the imaginary future into an equally imaginary past. Our next stop is TSR's second book for 1991, *Sorcerer's Stone* (April), by L. Dean James. Here the Red Kings guard the magical sword Kingslayer, so named because it once killed its royal wielder. Only by the blue light of the Sorcerer's Stone can the mystical blade be controlled, and only one young prince, the last of his line, can hope to master them both in time to save his kingdom and his life.

James, an author new to TSR, brings to her writing an active imagination. She says that as a child she "was the kid on the block who got everyone in trouble. Brainstorming, my mother called it. Once, we even carried home the under-padding for wall-to-wall carpet, which I nailed to our front lawn to create a nine-hole miniature golf course. My dad's good golf clubs and

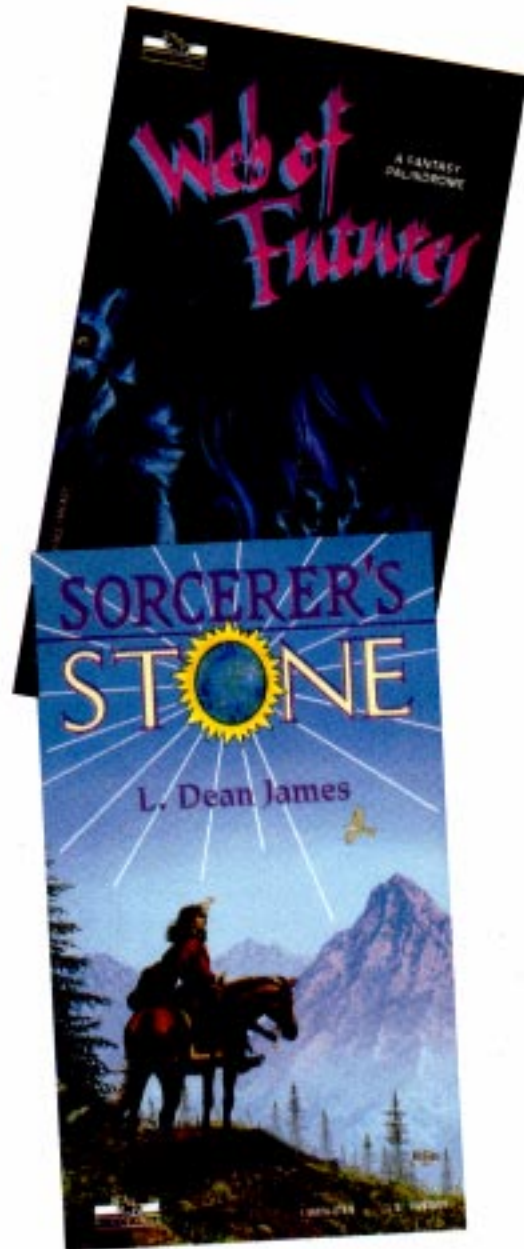
balls were employed in this venture—something I deeply regretted when he got home from work. I think my parents were relieved when, at nine, I began my first novel. This was a natural choice for me since my mother wrote constantly, selling articles to local newspapers and small magazines. What she wanted most, though, was to sell a novel. She died without ever realizing that dream. But her dream lived on in me."

James also has practical experience in survival. As a homesteader in northern California, she built cabins, milked cows, chopped wood, mended fences, and more. She writes: "Though I was mostly happy, I was also mostly exhausted. I moved back to the Los Angeles area, but my time up north had been well spent. Now I had a wealth of characters and settings to bring to my fiction."

From the young prince in *Sorcerer's Stone*, we move to a frustrated college professor in *The Falcon Rises* (June). According to author Michael C. Staudinger, *The Falcon Rises* is a story that "dabbles with the possibility of a world where literature and the story have real power to shape and control." It is the story of the magical world of Kesh, where the Dark Lord, Mordeth, has banned the use of storytelling for fear of its power. Through magical means, the Keshian Archmage has called from another dimension a hero to save Kesh from an age of darkness, a hero who happens to look exactly like the defeated Archmage. A dispirited English professor, Roy Arthre, is tossed unprepared into this world of magic and dragons where he is expected to master the magic and free the people from oppression. Helping him are Mithra Roshanna, the widow of the murdered Archmage, and the armies of the Pradatha, protectors of truth.

Staudinger, who has himself been an English teacher, admits that *The Falcon Rises* is a book "born deep in the gray green valleys of Washington State." After using a fantasy novel to teach his high-school students, he decided to write a story that included various aspects of storytelling and poetry, hoping that, within the framework of fantasy, students would begin to appreciate the power of the word in their lives.

The fourth book in TSR's line-up for 1991 is *Token of Dragonsblood* (August),



by Damaris Cole. It tells the story of Noressa, who, because she is raised as a commoner, is unaware of her royal birthright. Noressa's mother, a powerful but doomed queen, sends her to live in the country to keep her out of the reaches of an aunt who has deadly intentions. When Noressa's adoptive parents die, she is given an amulet by an old woman who is herself then murdered. Answering the amulet's powerful mental summons from the east, Noressa leaves her primitive home to find and fulfill her destiny.

Author Cole admits to being "a kid who refused to grow up. I admit that I love the stimulation of being scared spitless by a

great monster or bawling my eyes out over a tragic romance or romping through a grand adventure with a band of good-hearted cutthroats. And it's always more fun to take along some friends. Enter the magic of storytelling.

"And magic is the most fun of all, which is why I write fantasy. I have been told that dragons, flying carpets, and snowflake fairies are all impossibilities. The world is governed by rules. Rules keep us organized, give us direction. But they can also be stifling and unfair. So quite often while traveling that road of logic through the Forest of Life, magic is a little side road I take regularly. And I'm never disappointed by what I find when I'm lost in the woods. . . . Just listening to people—on the bus, at a restaurant—can start ideas rolling. I can listen to a friend at work complain about his wife nagging. But what I imagine is a foolish braggart lost in the enchanted forest tormented by an insidious golgrak that twines and tangles around his legs, nipping at his heels."

A firm believer in formal training for anyone who wants to be a writer, Cole advises friends who want to write to find a class. She says that "writers need to know craft as well as content. . . . If you can't tell the story right, no one is going to listen. And for this writer, having a happy audience is most satisfying."

Far from the medieval setting of *Dra-*

*gonsblood*, our next stop on the 1991 TSR Books tour finds us up in the sky. The *Cloud People* (October), by Robert B. Kelly, takes us to a floating world 12,000' above a desert planet, Calferon. It is a world of rugged landscapes created by a unique symbiosis of rock and plant. It is a world whose people have known strife, but never war—until now. The prince and heir to the throne of Fief Karcan investigates the crash of a "flying machine" in the Eastern Mountains, the setting from which it is prophesied a savior will come. Though the prince does not discover the pilot and "savior," he learns that his father, away on a mission of state, has been captured by the evil Lord Thyden. Now Thyden has his father's family medallion, within which lies the power that created their world. Only one person can open the medallion, however: the savior. The search is on for the missing pilot.

Kelly says, "I was intrigued to write a story that was set in the clouds. Unfortunately the only way my characters could walk among the clouds was to be as light as air themselves. In short: ghosts, spirits, or—God forbid—cartoon characters. Then I started toying with the physics of lighter-than-air gases. I created a species of plant whose closed buds, rather than flowers, would swell from the accumulation of the gases. All of a sudden I could make rock float. Now my characters could be flesh

and blood rather than spiritual. It was at that point that the book became science fiction,

"I think a sense of mystery is important in a novel because it engages the reader's attention more. The *Cloud People* asks the reader to become a historian-sleuth and piece together the past. I like to center the mystery around a civilization itself. The mystery in *The Cloud People* is who, why, and how this floating world was created. Open the history books to page one and it is already there. Why were both the details of and the reasons for its construction hidden?"

Kelly balances a writing career with a full-time job and family commitments, dictating into a microcassette recorder while driving and jogging. He says, "I'm rediscovering my childhood through my three children. Not so coincidentally, a part of the novel is an affirmation of the joyous yet fragile bliss of fatherhood."

From Kelly's *The Cloud People*, we go to *Lightning's Daughter* (December), a sequel to TSR's best-selling novel *Dark Horse*, both by Mary Herbert. *Lightning's Daughter* continues the story of the clanswoman Gabria, who must come to terms with her unique magical ability and her role as a strong woman leader in a male-dominated world. The magic-blessed outcasts from the horse clans make Gabria their mentor, but before she can become their teacher, she must lead them against a magical creature bent on destroying the Dark Horse Plains. As Gabria seeks to control the evil, supernatural being who is trying to destroy her, she must also try to show her people that magic itself is not the evil, heretical power they believe it to be.

Herbert says, "Writing *Lightning's Daughter* has been quite different from writing *Dark Horse*. I wrote the first book about seven years ago before the onslaught of babies, diapers, and school. Now I have a deadline and I have to balance my writing between two active children and their demands. It takes a great deal of mental juggling. I get so immersed in this world of clansmen, grasslands, and magic, it's sometimes difficult to return to the normal world." *Lightning's Daughter* is Herbert's second published novel, although she is in the process of publishing a young-adult fantasy and writing several children's books.

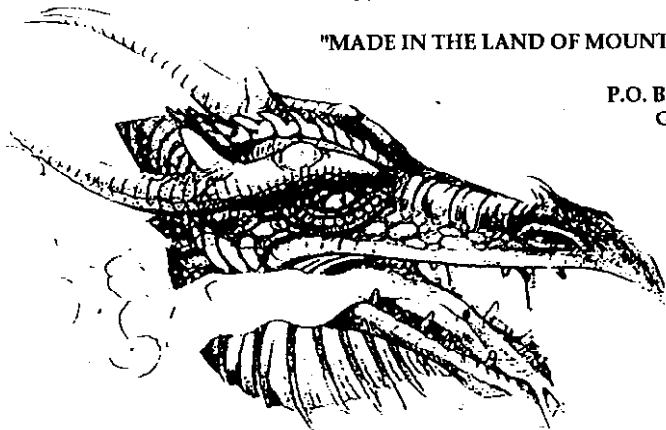
*Lightning's Daughter* concludes our preview for this month. Look for this new line of TSR Books, beginning in February 1991. You'll see a new release every other month, beginning with *Web of Futures*. Each is a journey into a world that's magical, mythical, and mysterious. We hope you will enjoy reading them as much as we've enjoyed choosing and preparing them for you.

And be sure to check this column in April, when "Novel Ideas" takes a look into the future of DRAGONLANCE® saga books for 1991. Adventure awaits!

Ω

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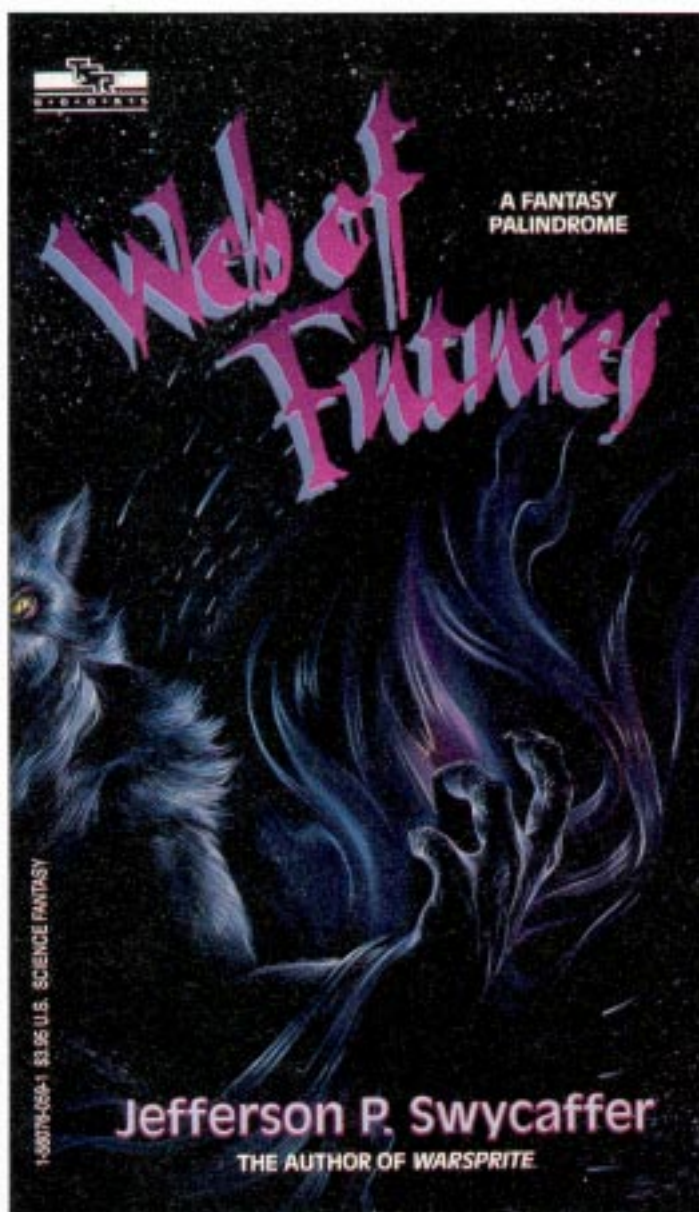
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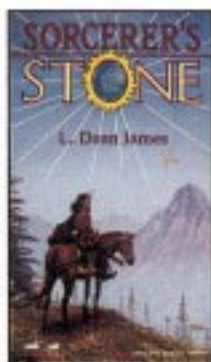


# Walk the Strands of Time

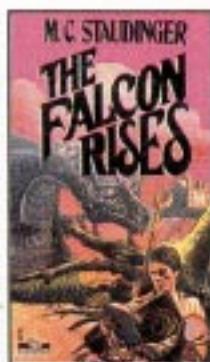
The tall man-shape with saucer eyes was covered from head to foot with dark, gleaming fur. It was definitely alien—while still being, in an odd way, earthly.

Maddock O'Shaughnessy—born liar, tavern-goer, idle fisherman—felt himself lifted up by the neck and held the way a man would display a rabbit. There, the whole world was spread out before him, like a diagram in a learned man's book. The next thing he knew, he was walking the strands of time in the house of webs. Oddly, it was he who was picked to save men's lives, collect their souls, and roam the future.

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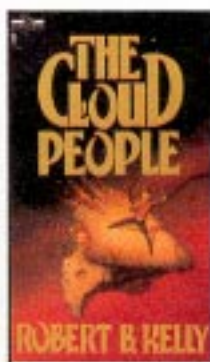
**Sorcerer's Stone**  
L. Dean Jones  
Available in April



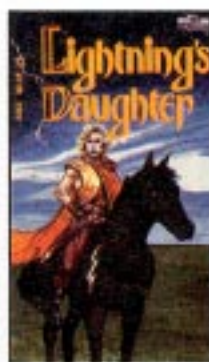
**The Falcon Rises**  
Michael C. Staudinger  
Available in June



**Token of Dragonsblood**  
Damaris Cole  
Available in August



**The Cloud People**  
Robert Kelly  
Available in October



**Lightning's Daughter**  
Mary H. Herbert  
Available in December



# FORUM



"Forum" welcomes your comments and opinions on role-playing games. In the United States and Canada, write to: Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Forum, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom. We ask that material submitted to "Forum" be either neatly written by hand or typed with a fresh ribbon and clean keys so we can read and understand your comments.

I have to say I heartily agree with Scott Ben-  
nie's assessments in his article "Characterization  
Made Easy" [in DRAGON issue #156]. . . Personally,  
my view is that if you can't create a character  
that's memorable for more than just his  
deeds, what's the point in calling it role-playing?  
I will be the first to admit that I haven't played  
as long as many others, but I have played long  
enough to try playing a few characters by  
stereotypes. Not only did I find them flat and  
boring, but so did the other players. They much  
preferred the halfling cleric who retched at the  
sight of rotting corpses; the sweet, conniving  
"J.R. of halflings"; or the hyperactive, pyromaniac  
Ophelia Hells gnome. Some characters had  
nice, normal upbringings, some had a skeleton  
or two in their closets, and a few (the above-  
mentioned "J.R." being my most notable) had  
truly traumatic yet twistedly interesting child-  
hoods. These upbringings affected all the char-  
acters' alignments (the above characters were  
classified as lawful good, neutral evil, and cha-  
otic neutral, respectively) and made my charac-  
ters so much more individualized than the  
typical hack-and-slash fighter or haughty elf.

I also have some additions to Scott's lists of  
types and stereotypes of adventurers. The types  
follow:

**Explorer:** This is the character who just wants  
to see what the big, wide world looks like out-  
side the confines of the town or farm. Most  
often this character is young and doesn't yet  
know what he wants from life. His adventures  
will be learning and growing experiences for  
him, and he may eventually become one of the  
other adventurer types.

**Swindler:** This character is going along for  
what he can get out of the group, and it usually  
isn't just money. Often, the other characters  
may not be aware of his true motives, such as  
using them for protection or as a convenient  
reason to get out of town and keep one step  
ahead of pursuers bent on his ill health. The  
swindler hopes to get in good with the group, so  
if things go bad, he's got someone to cover his  
behind!

And here are additional stereotypes (or: "This  
Halfling Player's Pet Peeves"):

11. All halflings are soft and cute.
12. All halflings are mischievous thieves.
13. (And the last one, which brings me to my  
next subject) All halflings are sex maniacs.

Believe it or not, that last stereotype was the  
first thing a veteran player said to me when he  
learned I was going to play a lawful-good half-  
ling cleric. I was angered by the statement,

since I was determined that Peregrin was going  
to be a virtuous little guy, but I believe sex does  
have a place in the game, if only to give the  
players and characters a little break from the  
monotony of constant dragon slaying. It also  
provides interesting role-playing—but don't get  
me wrong! What actually goes on in the bed-  
room should *never* be discussed around the  
table! I meant role-playing the reactions of the  
characters before and after, if they had any  
reactions at all. Perhaps the paladin tries to talk  
his friends out of doing things he believes  
should only be done with one's wife or husband.  
Or maybe the prospective wench is really an  
assassin out to kill the character with whom she  
goes upstairs.

One last thing, and this has to do with both  
personalities and alignments, since they are  
dependent upon each other. My last group came  
up with a system to officially recognize any  
habits of a character that tended to go against  
that PC's alignment. These habits: 1) made sense  
to the character; 2) were caused by the influ-  
ence of something or someone else, and; 3) were  
never strong enough to warrant changing the  
character's alignment. We called them "tenden-  
cies" and stated them along with alignment,  
such as "lawful neutral, with chaotic tenden-  
cies," or "neutral, with evil tendencies." The  
former described a bard whose normal inclina-  
tion to turn in a thief stopped when she knew  
that thief was her boyfriend. The latter de-  
scribed her boyfriend who, because of her  
influence, had changed from neutral evil but  
still retained his illicit trade business, including  
slavery, and his unpleasant ways of dealing with  
thieves who stole from him.

A classic example of the use of tendencies  
involves a dwarf who attacks orcs just because  
they're orcs. If you are playing a dwarf of  
lawful or neutral alignment, and the orcs don't  
look like they're going to attack, does it really  
make sense for the character to automatically  
attack the orcs? For the sake of making sense of  
it, we would classify this dwarf as being "lawful  
good (for example), with chaotic tendencies."  
The dwarf: 1) was raised among his own kind;  
2) from an early age was taught to hate certain  
races, such as orcs, and; 3) reacts this way only  
when orcs are around. It would be different if  
he reacted this way to every possible  
adversary—it certainly wouldn't be just a ten-  
dency then! He'd be a candidate for a radical  
alignment change!

Tendencies aren't automatic; they develop as  
you get to know your character. My little cleric  
tended to do very rash things if he saw an  
injustice or if a friend was in major peril, and he  
had to do some pretty good penances, too.  
Tendencies are a good way to allow players a  
little latitude in developing their characters  
realistically, but they can also be a gentle re-  
minder to the player that the DM is watching,  
and if the character deviates any more than is  
allowed, he might get hit with an alignment  
change!

Christine Wellman  
Ft. Myer VA

I am writing in regard to Ahmed G. Amin's  
letter in issue #155. As a DM of seven years and  
a player of 10 years, I agree with his assessment  
that players become bored with easy battles. My  
experience as a DM shows me that the players  
enjoy having their characters get into dangerous  
situations where they must use wit and cunning  
to solve problems and escape alive. The most  
fun my party ever had while I was DMing  
occurred when the PCs were confronted with a  
riddle to solve, serious monster opposition, and  
potentially deadly traps that had to be found  
and conquered.

As a player, my most enjoyable gaming ses-  
sions came as a member of a party that had a  
paladin, a ranger, two fighters, and a thief. The  
highest-level character in the party was the  
thief at 8th-level! Notice the complete lack of  
spell-casting abilities in this group. We had to  
use our wits and cunning in all encounters to  
counter our lack of a magic-user to blast us out  
of sticky situations, and lack of a cleric to pro-  
vide healing (though the paladin could use his  
laying-on of hands).

Concerning the use of *resurrection* spells,  
much depends on what the circumstances are  
of the character's death. If the character dies  
because of some foolishness on the part of the  
player, no *resurrection* is allowed. On the other  
hand, if the character dies due to no fault of the  
player, such as fighting to save a fellow party  
member or just pure bad luck, then *resurrec-  
tion* is possible if the party can afford to pay the  
price. I once knew of a magic-user in a group  
looking through some ice caves, and he was  
opposed to looking any further; then a white  
dragon breathed on the group, killing the mage  
instantly. When the party got the character out,  
I allowed a *resurrection* to take place. Most  
characters never do approach the maximum  
number of times they can be *resurrected*, but  
that is what the *resurrection* survival roll is for,  
isn't it?

Rob Williams  
Goshen IN

I am writing in response to Ahmed Amin's  
letter in issue #155. I agree with Ahmed whole-  
heartedly on the fact that the gaining of gold  
and magic and the winning of easy battles is  
pointless if the PCs aren't in any real danger.

In the first campaign I DMed, I thought that  
*resurrection* was too easy also, so I caused a  
character's constitution to go down 1-4 points  
each time he died. I soon dropped it as it had no  
effect on the player's view of character death (I  
see now that the AD&D 2nd Edition rules state  
that a character's constitution goes down one  
point for every *resurrection*). Then I simply  
used the regular rules but handled *resurrection*  
slightly differently: I kept the *resurrection*  
ability further from their grasp. For example, a  
typical conversation with a high-level NPC cleric  
might go something like this:

"High Priestess Yara, will you raise our be-  
loved companion?"

"Yes. . ."

"Thank you!"

"... if you donate 50,000 gold pieces and three magical items to the temple treasury, then perform a quest for our almighty deity."

"We'll think on that."

See what I mean? It's easy to keep resurrection barely within or beyond the reach of adventuring parties without banning the spell entirely. Simply making sure that PCs can't rely upon a cleric resurrecting them if and when they die will strike the fear of death into most players, but still allow those characters who died "unfairly" to be brought back to life.

Of course, after a cleric in the adventuring party who happens to have an 18 wisdom gets to 14th level, resurrection is easily obtained. I have found, however, that even this creates no problem, since the chance of resurrection failure (due to constitution) is enough to allow a good chance for permanent character death. In addition, even those lucky dogs with 18 constitutions have plenty of other ways to die so that resurrection is impossible (when the body is destroyed, etc.).

In conclusion, I'd like to say that in all three full campaigns I've DMed (including an AD&D 2nd Edition one that I am currently handling), I haven't had much trouble with player boredom. I think that part of my success is that I do my best to make players believe that their characters are in one heck of a dangerous situation, and they often are but not to the extent that I portray. Also, I try not to give them any breaks. Finally, I, like Ahmed, have yet to see a perfect balance struck [between challenging and threatening PCs], but trying to come as close as possible is part of the art of being a DM.

Jeremiah Lynch  
La Crescent MN

I wish to address the subject of pregenerated D&D and AD&D campaign worlds, and the increasing output of material and articles devoted to them (especially in DRAGON Magazine).

I have been DMing since I started playing nearly 10 years ago, and quite frankly I feel that the preoccupation with these game worlds defeats one of the fundamental reasons why I (for one) began playing in the first place—that is, to satisfy a creative desire.

I have never used someone else's campaign world in which to bade my adventures; I've always felt that the prime purpose of being a Dungeon Master was to gain a sense of accomplishment by designing what is (for the DM and his players) the "perfect" fantasy world. Thus, I am irked by the increasing space given over to the specific details of other people's worlds (that are invariably of a high-fantasy nature) within the pages of DRAGON Magazine. I would prefer to see articles aiding new and experienced DMs in the ongoing task of creating and expanding their own worlds, including creating civilizations and cultures; personally tailoring monsters, treasures, dungeons; and (most especially) refereeing techniques.

I have nothing at all against pregenerated campaigns per se, many of which have been derived from or progressed into the format of a novel. However, this is where they should stay. Novels are, of course, where much of the inspiration for the D&D games came from way back when, and I think novels are still probably the best source of fantasy ideas next to mythological tales (although one must not forget art, music, and poetry). New DMs should not, however, be led into thinking that all fantasy campaigns should be treated in this or that way. The writ-

ers have borrowed certain fantasy structures from the D&D systems and excluded others; that in itself is fine (this is what any DM would do, unless he takes every guideline ever written for the game). Unfortunately, overexposing a DM's campaigns [to ideas from novels] implies that other structures, such as a low-fantasy approach, are not worthwhile interpretations of the rules.

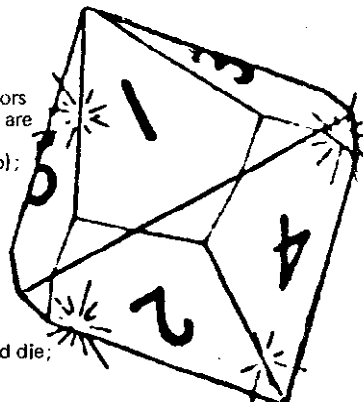
Pregenerated game settings are probably great for tournament situations, where the emphasis is laid upon getting involved in the game first and the world second. I cannot believe, though, that I'm the only DM who has become tired of seeing endless articles on the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ campaign or supplements for the DRAGONLANCE® saga, information that is only useful to those familiar with these settings and the brand of fantasy that they exemplify. If you are going to explore pregenerated worlds in DRAGON Magazine, I would rather you ran a series of articles on the designs of a section of DMs across the board. These might show contrasts between low- and high-fantasy campaigns, how the referees have tackled aspects of DMing during design and during play, and even how different DMs store and file their campaign info! (I'd be most interested to know what other players think about this.) I am sure we could all use more of the sort of information that will help us to determine which DMing decisions work and which do not, such as the excellent articles published in DRAGON Magazine some years ago (e.g., "Curing the Monty Haul Malady," from issue #82). Pregenerated worlds must not be given priority over teaching the techniques of DMing, which are what make the D&D systems so special and

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Craig Hardie  
Huntingdon, Cambridge  
United Kingdom

I am writing in response to Erik Martella in DRAGON issue #159. Mr. Martella states that "liches . . . retain their goals and ambitions after entering the state of undeath." He quotes the *Monstrous Compendium* as saying that lichs "seek to further their own power at all costs" and implies that this is the same for characters who seek to become lichs. He neglects to mention, however, the reasons behind this desire for power. Characters most often desire power to gain wealth and status. Liches, on the other hand, desire power for its own sake. They also have a secondary goal: destruction of the living. Mr. Martella seems to be treating the transition from life to undeath as the simple gaining of new powers and immunities when, in reality, it is a complete makeover of a character's hopes, wishes, and dreams, as well as an increase in physical and magical abilities.

Mr. Martella [notes that the *Monstrous Compendium*] also states that "once a character becomes a spectre, recovery . . . [requires] a

special quest." He then gives this as a reason for having PC spectres, asking, "How can somebody complete a quest when he is an NPC?" The flaw in this rationale lies in assuming that the quest must be undertaken by the character himself, rather than his friends and allies.

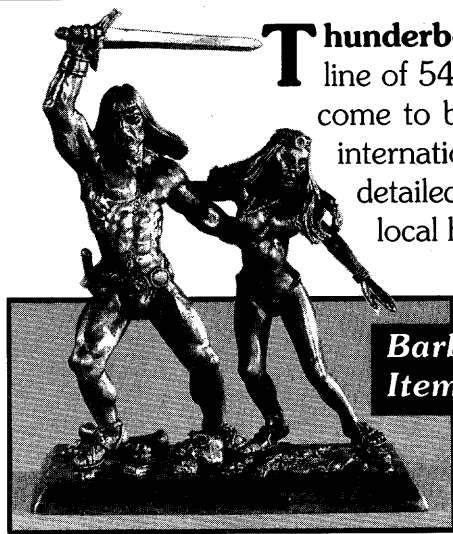
Characters should never be allowed to retain PC status when becoming undead. If this happens, game balance will be completely thrown off. As an example, how would most DMs feel if their clerics started using *animate dead* as a mass *resurrection* spell?

Jeremy Borgen  
Cheyenne WY

"Forum" in DRAGON issue #159 began with a letter from Dan Howarth questioning my comments in issue #151. I appreciate his comments, but I must defend my earlier points. On the matter of interaction and roles, Mr. Howarth claims that he has enjoyed his character Baxian during the game *The Bard's Tale* in the same sense as one would enjoy a PC in a "live" game. While I do not doubt that the game was enjoyable (as I have played it myself), it offers several restrictions. To remain within the context of that game, the only chances for interaction with either the player or the game are as follows: movement in four directions, attack, defend, use, parry, and party attack (if I remember correctly). On occasion, the game will require the entry of a riddle answer or password, but beyond that, all is controlled by the computer. I fail to see how a proper "role" can be established by using those limited commands. A role includes many more nuances not available in any gaming system. No game on the market today (or in the foreseeable future) allows one a

choice to swagger, limp, barge, or meander into a tavern. In the vast majority of cases, characters cannot phrase their own replies to the game's questions, as the program allows for only a short list of highly restricted options. SSI's *Pool of Radiance*, et. al., go a short distance to relieve this problem by allowing speech in several modes (haughty, sly, nice, etc.), but only in set encounters. The possibilities during a live game are unlimited; those on a computer RPG are finite and few.

The next point of Mr. Howarth's letter concerns spontaneity. I stated in my letter that since the programming of a computer is in a set and given format, it lacked the randomness of a human GM. Unfortunately, Mr. Howarth misinterpreted this and said that since he could not read assembly language (in which most computer games are written), the game could retain its spontaneity. Such was not my meaning at all. My intent was to bring out the point that computers follow their set programs during all phases of the game. To continue with *Pool of Radiance*, an example would be that after one or two encounters with kobolds, the player learns that they will always attack the party if the party speaks nicely. Similarly, the games are written into a firm background, and your friend's copy of *Pool* will behave the same as yours. Note that I do not hold this against computer RPGs, because I realize that technology does not allow for artificial intelligence to run home computer games in the manner that humans would. Two GMs will never act the same in the same circumstance, nor will a single GM necessarily follow the same course of action, while a computer will blindly follow the same course each time.



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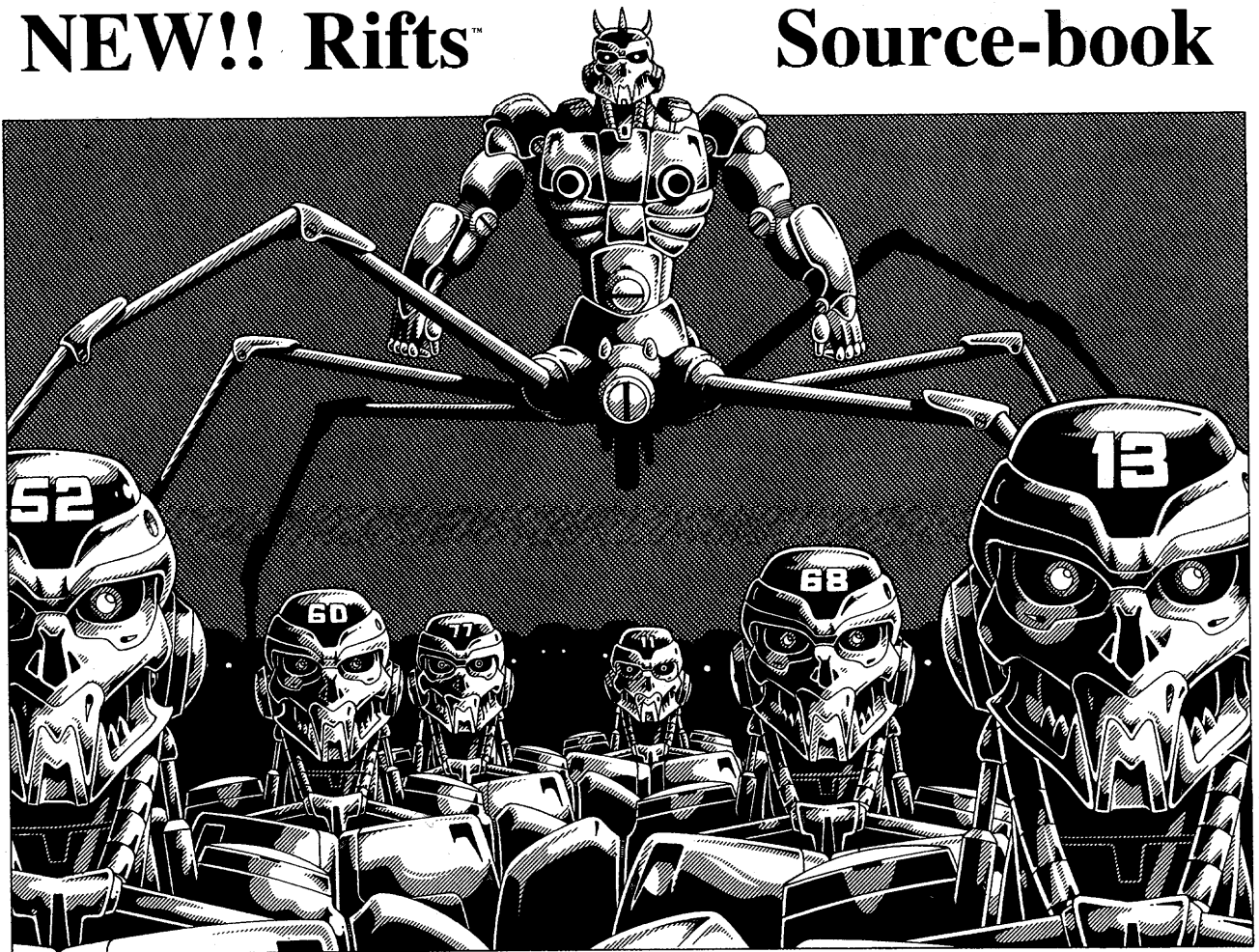
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Mr. Howarth continues by noting the difficulty in gathering a group of players and a GM in a session. He made the comparison between putting a computer on pause and sending gamers packing when dinner was ready. I would claim that this can be easily solved by a bit of simple planning. Yes, it is considered rude to ask gamers to leave when dinner is served, but why not have everyone chip in and order pizza? I have done this on many occasions, and it has been nearly as much fun during the meal as during the game. Another solution would be to plan so that the game did not extend into the mealtime, or plan it to start after the meal is completed. As for the difficulty of convincing one of the participants to be a GM, I regret that you have that complication. It is a problem for which there is no ready solution, but for me, giving up and turning to a computer is hardly the answer (no offense intended and I trust none taken).

Next, I hold that my calculation of the space required by the data would indeed be a significant matter. I claimed that the 1st edition *DMG*, *PHB*, and *MM1* alone would take 37 floppy disks. Mr. Howarth claimed that it could be compressed into five or six disks and used the example that *Pool* required 384K of RAM and "would have come on about 15 disks, but because of the compression, it came on three." My calculations were based on the Apple format, which can include 140K of data per side on a 5.25" disk, and I cannot fathom where Mr. Howarth would acquire disks that would hold only 25.6K (384/15). Indeed, his note confirms my point, as 384K/140K per disk would be three disks, while the 5250K required for the books would still take 37 (which would fill the disks, regardless of compression).

I take final contention with one of the latter comments in the letter, that stated that "computers are going to be part of this world, whether you like it or not." I am sorry if my letter were interpreted as an attack on computers, for indeed they are invaluable in our daily life. My letter was merely pointing out that computer RPGs could not and will not replace live RPGs in any sense, as they lack the vital components necessary to merit that designation, a claim that I believe still stands. I welcome any further communication about the matter, from any reader, through "Forum!"

Alan Grimes  
Kansas City MO

After reading the "Voidjammers!" article (DRAGON issue #159), I was amused by the idea of an astral taxi service. The best use for this organization would be to speed up play, allowing a kind and benevolent DM to move the party members through "Astralia" without forcing them to hack their way through githyanki hordes. I was disturbed, however, by the self-described omnipotence of the voidjammers and their super-mage, Peregrin. Not only am I upset by these upstart humans messing up astral space, but Peregrin just doesn't have the assets to protect his silly little ships. In the real world of the SPELLJAMMER™ boxed set, Peregrin's fleet would be wiped out in minutes by pirate raids, beholder civil wars, and radiant dragon lunch breaks.

There are many reasons for this vulnerability. First off, the voidjammer ships are relatively slow. *Manual of the Planes* (page 64) states that the speed attained by mental movement is 30' (3") per point of intelligence. This would allow a person with an intelligence of 18 to move at 54". As a voidjammer hull moves only at 48"

(equal to an intelligence of 16), it is not the fastest thing in astral space. Almost all of the beings likely to be encountered in the Astral plane will have an intelligence of at least 16. In fact, the githyanki long ago developed the "void cruiser" battle sleds (from the "Fedifensor" module in DRAGON issue #67) that can carry a dozen people at the movement rate of the smartest person aboard. These are not only faster than the voidjammers, but they were developed long before Peregrin was even born.

The choice of heavy catapults and heavy scorpions for use on an astral battlefield is unwise. The rate of fire of these heavy weapons is too low to deal with the short reaction times found in astral combat. The article states that creatures can be seen from 1,000 to 2,000 yards away. A githyanki attack seen at the maximum 2,000 yards range will reach the ship in less than seven rounds. If the attack is not discovered until the githyanki are much closer, or if the attack is launched using a head-on collision course, the approach time will be much less (perhaps as little as two rounds). During this time, the ship's heavy weapons will be lucky to get off a single shot. If the attackers come straight down at the ship from 12 o'clock high (made possible by the lack of gravity), the weapons will not even be able to react to the attack.

The weapons are also the wrong tools for the job. A passenger liner with a schedule to meet will not wander off its course in a search for enemy fortifications. If a fort drifts into its path, the ship can simply go around it. Responsible captains will not put their passengers in danger by using a single catapult against a heavily defended adamantite fort (this is a good way to lose the ship). Astral combat is more likely to be between the ship and free-floating humanoids, whether a single powerful raider (such as a devil) or a mob of powerful raiders (such as a githyanki regiment). There are simply not enough large creatures or objects in the Astral plane to warrant the use of siege weapons. A more effective choice of weapons would include rows of rapid-fire, anti-githyanki weapons along the sides of the ship. During combat, the ship can also be spun along its long axis in order to bring new unfired weapons to bear on approaching enemies. If the ship spins, it will also disrupt the attackers' plans, as they now cannot simply launch a mass attack against the top of the ship. The only reason to mount a heavy ballista would be to use magical *javelins of lightning*, *piercing*, etc. against single powerful beings.

The open deck used by the voidjammers is just asking for trouble, as boarding actions against open-top ships are incredibly easy to pull off in a zero-gravity battlefield. Githyanki that are 90" away at the start of the round (well outside most missile ranges) will be in your face at the end of the round. They will also have a hefty charge bonus, as they move four times as fast as a light calvary unit. A better design would be a ship that is completely sealed, like a turtle. If the ship is also spinning, it will be much more difficult to board it. A roof over the battle deck also prevents the exposed marines from being picked off by long-range missile fire.

By the way, with most of the ship's mass removed by the anti-gravity spell, the ram is useless. The ship would simply bounce off anything big enough to be worth ramming in the first place. Ramming requires speed and mass (and lots of it) to be effective.

I also have doubts on the validity of Peregrin's omnipotence on the Astral plane. From what I have seen of his state and magical items, a well-trained githyanki regiment could wipe him out

in only a few minutes, especially if it is backed up by the immortal githyanki lich-queen. Indeed, an abortive attack may be launched against one of his ships just to get Peregrin to rescue it and fall right into a githyanki ambush. Peregrin has only 45 hp, by the way.

I must also object to Peregrin's use of illithid brains as engines. While I congratulate him on finding a use for mind-flayer brains, one of Nature's most renewable resources, there are certain ethical questions that must be raised regarding the salvage and storage of those brains. (A mind is a terrible thing to waste.) While mind flayers may be looked down upon by most civilized beings, I'm sure there are few who would condone the harvesting and slavery of their brains (reanimating the dead or their body parts is an evil act, by the way). The githyanki brains that Peregrin uses in his ship are also human brains, as the FIEND FOLIO® tome clearly states. Almost everyone would appreciate the defeat of the githyanki, but few would appreciate the harvesting of human brains (this is one reason why everyone is after the mind flayers in the first place). If Peregrin does not clean up his act soon, he may earn a visit from the Morality Police (and not even Peregrin can stand up to a few solars and their buddies).

I think that the voidjammers presented in the article should represent Peregrin's first attempt at establishing a regular passenger service. After losing all of these ships to enemy action, and after receiving a few notices from the forces of Good or Neutrality frowning on his brain trade, Peregrin may have decided to go with regular spelljamming technology like everybody else (spelljamming helms are thought activated and should work on the Astral plane). A spelljammer, even at tactical speeds, would run rings around the fastest brain-powered voidjammer.

A series of adventures revolving around the slow collapse of Peregrin's taxi service and the introduction of spelljamming technology can keep players entertained for some time. Players may also be curious as to where these fancy engines are coming from, which will lead them to venture into the arcane space of the SPELLJAMMER modules. The outer and lower planes have gotten somewhat boring since the disappearance of the demons and devils, and there is nothing like being on the receiving end of a few neogi suicide attacks to put the excitement back into the characters' lives.

Steven Zamboni  
Everett WA

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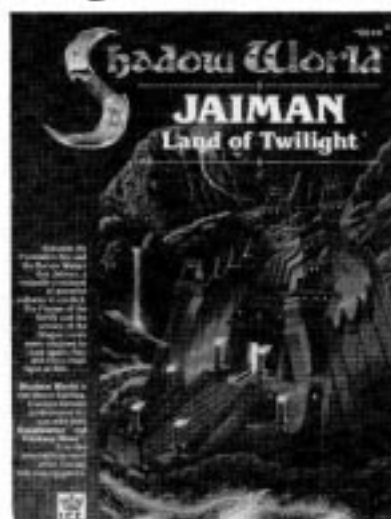


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# The Navy Wants You!

## High-seas espionage for the TOP SECRET/S.I.<sup>TM</sup> game

by Robert Rinas

This TOP SECRET/S.I.<sup>TM</sup> article introduces players to the world of military intelligence, using the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) as the agency that employs their characters. Most characters in such campaigns will be officers and enlisted men in the United States Navy, the most powerful naval force in the world. Civilians in the group would most likely be in the Professional or Academic career groups, working with the ONI as civilian employees of the Department of Defense (DOD). Civilians function as academic advisors or instructors, fonts of knowledge who allow intelligence to be better gathered and analyzed.

### Navy character creation

For officers and men of the United States Navy, the Military career in the TOP SECRET/S.I. *Player's Guide* (page 29) is not adequate, as the Navy is more technically oriented than the Army or the Marine Corps (the Military career suits the latter two well). As such, most Navy character skill points should not be allocated toward combat skills.

There are three ways a person can enter the Navy: enlist; attend the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.; or join the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). The latter two, when completed, each confer a commission in the Navy.

First, it must be determined whether or not a person can make it into the Navy at all. Table 1 shows the minimum requirements for officers and enlisted men to join up. If the character does not meet the requirements of any option of entry into the Navy, the only other option is if he has a high INT, in which case he can become a Professional or an Academic—a civilian with security clearance to be a member of the adventuring group.

If a character meets the requirements for the Academy, he can make a ½ INT roll. If successful, he is accepted at Annapolis. If not, he can join the Navy as an enlisted man and try later (if he still meets the officer requirements) to go to the Officer Training School at Annapolis. For every three years that an enlisted character has been in the Navy, he gets one 1/8 INT roll, gaining a commission if successful. Someone who becomes an officer by this method is given a rank of ensign (or, in special circumstances, lieutenant, j.g.).

When an enlisted character becomes an officer, his career is literally starting over. After a long time with no success at INT rolls, most sailors give up, for they do not want to be the oldest lieutenants in the Navy! (Note: if a person has no desire to become an officer, he need not apply to Officer Training School.) If he becomes an officer, he receives all of the special skills

of the officer specialty of his choice, which are almost always related to his specialty when he was an enlisted man. Thus, a quartermaster or a helmsman would most likely become a navigator, and an engineering crewman would most likely become an engineering officer.

If a character enters the Navy through ROTC, then he must use either the Professional or Academic career (with the exception of airline pilots). The minimum skill requirements for this must be met; remaining skill points will most likely be used for skills learned in the Navy. There are two options open to Administrators regarding meeting minimum skill-point expenditure requirements for characters:

1. If the character does not have enough skill points to fulfill his minimum requirements, he must choose another specialty that he can complete. (SEALs are an exception to this because of the number of skills they must take, and it is recommended that they always use option 2. If you are playing an exclusively *Commando*-oriented game, follow the rules in the *Commando* supplement.)

2. If the character does not have enough skill points to fulfill his minimum requirements, then give him enough points to meet the bare minimum.

Each Navy character must choose a specialty and, based on that specialty, must







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take certain skills at zero level at least. The character will also be given certain skills free. See Tables 2, 3, and 4 for details.

Table 5 shows the percentage chance a person has to attain a particular rank. This is found by cross-referencing the rank with the character's years of service. Read from right to left, trying to get the highest possible rank first; then, if failing to get that rank, moving left. For example, a character who is an officer and has been in the Navy for seven years first tries to become 0-4 (45%); failing that, he tries for 0-3 (85%), and will be 0-2 (100%) automatically if the second roll fails. Table 6 explains the rank structure of the U.S. Navy.

## Naval skills

New skills offered in this article are described in the following section. Skill-point costs (as per the *Player's Guide*) immediately follow each skill name.

**Ship Helm Operations** (2/2/4): This skill involves the steering of a large ship. This does not mean that one character can run an entire ship; it just means that he can fill his station in the operation of the ship. This skill deals with deck operations, like ship handling, as opposed to engineering and weapons systems. Usually, an officer with this skill supervises and teaches enlisted personnel in ship handling. A person with this skill can become, in civilian life, a deck officer on a tanker or freighter or a harbor pilot, among other jobs.

**Submarine Helm Operations** (4/2/4): This skill is similar to Ship Helm Operations, but several factors are added. For example, sub operations involve going up and down as well as along a flat plane. Also, submarines usually have a single screw or propeller only, making maneuvering difficult. This is why subs rely on tugs so much in harbors. For these reasons, Submarine Helm Operations is a difficult skill to learn.

**Torpedo** (3/2/3): This is similar to the Missile skill herein, but it involves sea-launched or air-launched torpedoes whose targets are either surface vessels or submarines.

**Missile/SLBM** (4/2/5): The Missile/SLBM skill deals with the submarine part of the American "nuclear triad." It allows characters to be missile officers or missile technicians on an SSBN (ballistic missile submarine, or "boomer"). The use of nuclear weapons in any game scenario is strongly discouraged! This skill is useful more as a guide for the disarmament of such weapons and as a background skill. (For more on nuclear weapons—for the 1st Edition TOP SECRET® game—see the articles "Agents and A-bombs" and "After the Blast" in DRAGON® issue #108)

## SEALs and UDT's

In 1983, the UDTs (Underwater Demolitions Teams) ceased to exist as separate units and became SEAL Teams Four and Five. Therefore, the main options for

Special Warfare specialists and officers are SEALs and SBUs (Special Boat Units).

## Skill points

The number of skill points for U.S. Navy characters is optionally determined by the method given in TSAC5 *Commando*—that is, divide a character's intelligence by 5 (rounding down) and add 21 to the result. Another option is to award an extra five points to Navy characters because more of their time is spent in training than their civilian counterparts.

## Military intelligence

Military intelligence is similar in many ways to civilian intelligence. However, while civilian intelligence tends to deal with political information (i.e., political stability, factions, leadership, economic/political influence), military intelligence deals with military readiness, capabilities, technological developments, and relation-

ships between the military and the political structure. The respective jurisdictions of these two intelligence groupings do sometimes overlap.

However, military intelligence relies less upon human sources than the civilian version. This was due to a policy in the 1960s '70s, and '80s that stressed electronic intelligence (ELINT) as opposed to human intelligence (HUMINT). However, this is changing, and the number of HUMINT specialists is growing in all of the armed services.

Another difference between the military and civilian services is that the military has different assets at its disposal. While the CIA has embassy intelligence staff, legal and illegal agents, etc., the military has defense attaches, reconnaissance ships, aircraft and satellites, special forces (e.g., SEALs, Green Berets, etc.), and a very high degree of technology and funding. Agents have a greater chance than usual

**Table 1**  
**Minimum Requirements For Naval Enlistment**

Option	STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
Enlisted	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
Academy	40	60	40	55	40	40	50
ROTC	40	50	40	45	40	40	45

**Table 2**  
**Naval Enlisted Skills**

**Free skills:** Basic Firearms, Basic Melee, Basic Tool Use, Swimming (1)

Specialty	Skills
Aviation Crew	Basic Mechanic, Aircraft Mechanic
Computer Technician	Electronics, Computer Technician
Diver:	
Repair	Basic Mechanic, SCUBA Diving
Research	Basic Mechanic, EMERSON, Spear Gun, SCUBA Diving
Electronics Technician	Electronics
Engineering Crew	
Nonnuclear	Basic Mechanic
Nuclear	Electronics, Nuclear Technician
Gunnery	
Guns	Basic Heavy Weapons, Artillery
Missile	Basic Heavy Weapons, Missile
Helmsman	
Submarine	Submarine Helm Operations
Surface Ship	Ship Helm Operations
Small Craft	Driving/Boat
Intelligence	Cartography, Photo-Analysis
Machinist	Basic Mechanic
Military Police	Club/Blackjack, Driving/Auto, Driving/Off-road, Pistol, Rifle
Missile Technician	Basic Heavy Weapons, Electronics, Missile/SLBM, Nuclear Technician
Quartermaster	Cartography, Navigation
Radarman	Radar
Radio Operator	Cryptography, Radio Operator
Sonarman	Sonar
Special Warfare	
SEALs	see TSAC5 <i>Commando</i> supplement
Special Boat Units	Basic Heavy Weapons, Basic Mechanic, Driving/Boat, Machine Gun

of being able to use military equipment (that isn't already in use by military intelligence) for special missions. More special intelligence missions exist for the military, such as beach reconnaissance by SEALs to scout a possible attack site, or missions to find out about a new type of attack submarine being built in the U.S.S.R.'s Nikolayev Shipyards on the Black Sea.

## The Office of Naval Intelligence

The Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) is composed of an administrative unit at the top (the ONI proper) and three commands: the Naval Security Group Command (NSGC), the Naval Intelligence Command (NIC), and the Naval Investigative Service Command (NISC).

The ONI is commanded by the Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI), who usually holds the rank of Rear Admiral, Lower Half (O-7). Directly beneath him are the Deputy Directors for Naval Intelligence (DDNIs), each of whom is in charge of a separate command. A DDNI normally holds the rank of Captain (O-6).

The DDNI for Cryptology directs the NSGC, headquartered at 3801 Nebraska Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20016. It is composed of five branches: Telecommunications and Automated Data Systems, Logistics and Material, Special Operations, Electronic Warfare and Signals Security, and Technical Development. As can be seen from these titles, the NSGC's area of responsibility is signals intelligence and security. Signals intelligence (SIGINT) involves cryptology (i.e., encoding/decoding) as well as wiretapping and signals interception. Signals security (COMSEC) also involves cryptology and ways of making communications more secure.

The DDNI for Intelligence commands the NIC. It is headquartered at 4600 Silver Hill Road, Suitland MD 20746. This is the largest section of the ONI and is split into four subordinate organizations: Task Force 168 (TF168), the Naval Intelligence Processing System Support Activity (NIPSSA), the Naval Intelligence Support Center (NISC), and the Navy Operational Intelligence Center (NOIC). The basic task of the NIC is to gather information. TF168 collects information primarily from emigres and defectors, NISC obtains information on primarily technical matters, and NOIC collects operational intelligence (e.g., Soviet naval movements, etc.)

The DDNI for Investigation heads the NISC that provides counterintelligence services within the U.S. Navy, and also investigates crimes possibly committed by U.S. Navy personnel. The NIS is not covered in detail here because the main focus of this article is on intelligence gathering and, to a lesser degree, special operations. However, counterintelligence activities can be both exciting and frustrating, and it may be worth the effort to do some research into the activities and organization of the NIS for your own campaign.

## Adventure ideas

Just as with any large, multifaceted intelligence agency, there are countless things that can be done with the ONI. Three possibilities follow:

1. The characters could be assigned to penetrate and infiltrate the U.S.S.R.'s Nikolayev Shipyards and gather information on a new class of conventional aircraft carrier that is about to start sea trials. Snapping photos, finding out internal technical details, and even inspecting the ship or its plans would be mission objectives. Naturally, this won't be easy! Part of the team

must have technical skills (e.g., marine engineers) for interpretation of the information, and naval aviators could get information on the aircraft carried (e.g., details on the naval-version MiG-29). Speaking Russian is a must. This mission would fall under the jurisdiction of the NISC.

It would help to check out some information about new Soviet carriers in real life before running this adventure. Good publications to check include *Jane's Soviet Intelligence Review*, *Jane's Defense Weekly*, and other defense-related magazines.

2. The cloud cover over Cam Ranh Bay

**Table 3**  
**Naval Officer Skills**

**Free Skills:** Basic Firearms, Basic Melee, Basic Science, Navigation, Swimming (2)

Specialty	Skills
Air Warfare <sup>1</sup>	
Strike	Instrument Flying, Pilot/Jet, Pilot/1-Engine, Missile
Maritime	Instrument Flying, Pilot/Multi-engine, Pilot/1-Engine
Helo <sup>2</sup>	Instrument Flying, Pilot/Helicopter, Pilot/1-Engine
E-2/C-2	Instrument Flying, Pilot/Multi-engine, Pilot/1-Engine
NFO	Navigation, Pilot/1-Engine, Radar
Intelligence <sup>3</sup>	
Non-SIGINT	Cartography, Interrogation, Photo analysis
SIGINT	Cryptography, Engineering-Electrical, Radio Operator
Military Police	Club/Ax/Blackjack, Driving/Auto, Driving/Off-road, Interrogation, Pistol, Rifle
Special Warfare	
SEAL	see TSAC 5 Commando supplement
Special Boat Units	Basic Heavy Weapons, Basic Mechanic, Driving/Boat (1), Machine Gun
Subsurface Warfare	
Eng.-Nuclear	Engineering-Nuclear
Navigation	Submarine Helm Operations, Navigation (1)
Weapons	Basic Heavy Weapons, Missile, Torpedo,
Missile (SSBN)	Basic Heavy Weapons, Electronics, Missile/SLBM, Nuclear Technician
Surface Warfare	
Eng.-Marine	Engineering-Marine (Surface Ships)
Eng.-Nuclear	Engineering-Nuclear
Navigation	Ship Helm Operations, Navigation (1)
Weapons	Basic Heavy Weapons, Artillery, Missile, Radar

1. Navy characters opting for the Air Warfare specialty must specialize in one particular type of aircraft (e.g., the F-14 Tomcat) in addition to specifying a general type of aircraft.
2. "Helo" is a term denoting helicopters.
3. Only female officers graduating from the Navy's ROTC program can start out in Intelligence. The Navy wants men to at least start out as line officers (i.e., surface, subsurface, air, and special warfare). This restriction does not apply to Annapolis graduates or to enlisted personnel.

**Table 4**  
**Aircraft Categories and Types**

**Strike:** A-6 Intruder, A-7 Corsair, F/A-18 Hornet, F-4 Phantom II, F-14 Tomcat, S-3 Viking

**Maritime:** C-130 Hercules, P-3 Orion

**Helo:** H-1 Iroquois, H-2 Seasprite, H-3 Seaking, H-46 Sea Knight, H-53 Sea Stallion, SH-60 Seahawk

**E-2/C-2:** E-2 Hawkeye, C-2 Greyhound

Information about these aircraft should be available at any library carrying books on aviation.



in Vietnam has been hanging for a long time, and the meteorologists say it won't be going away for a long time. A team of characters must go in for routine surveil-

lance to monitor Soviet naval traffic. Of course, the Administrator will make sure that it is *not* a routine mission. Is something unusual going on? This mission

would fall under the jurisdiction of the NOIC.

3. One of the main drawbacks to a large organization like the Central Intelligence Agency or the Office of Naval Intelligence is that each character is only a small part of the group and thus has very specialized duties. However, it would be possible to make a semi-independent unit under the ONI that is designed to operate in a specific area. One example is the fictional Task Force 117, which provides muscle for drug-interdiction operations abroad by using naval intelligence and special operations assets to assist DEA agents. Agents in this group would get special diplomatic papers to allow greater freedom of action, and team leaders around the world would get priority status when asking for diplomatic papers for DEA agents and others.

A big bonus to semi-independent groups is that, because the teams are small, the characters' roles are not too specialized and mundane. Characters shouldn't be given access to heavy military armaments (like F-14s and warships), although they would have the authority to employ E-2 and C-2 reconnaissance-aircraft missions, since that is clearly within the framework of their duties.

**A Final Note:** Characters don't have to work for the NISC or NOIC all the time. They can perform missions for other branches of the ONI, assuming that they were seconded or transferred. Moving around like this provides greater variety in the characters' missions.

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For further information on naval and defense matters, several periodicals and reference books can help you. Among them are the Jane's series (*Jane's Fighting Ships* and *Jane's All The World's Aircraft*, among others) and such periodicals as *Jane's Defense Weekly* and *International Defense Review*. In the field of defense-related reference books, Jane's has a corner on the market. These volumes are extremely expensive, but any large library should have an up-to-date copy of whatever you need.

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**Table 5**  
**Officer and Enlisted Rank Acquisition**

Years of Service	O-1 E-1	O-2 E-2	O-3 E-3	O-4 E-4	O-5 E-5	O-6 E-6	O-7 E-7	O-8 E-8	O-9 E-S	O-10
1	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	100%	75%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	100%	95%	10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	100%	95%	35%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	100%	100%	75%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	100%	100%	80%	20%	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	100%	100%	85%	45%	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	100%	100%	90%	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	100%	100%	95%	75%	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	100%	100%	97%	80%	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	100%	100%	99%	85%	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	100%	100%	99%	90%	20%	-	-	-	-	-
13	100%	100%	99%	95%	45%	-	-	-	-	-
14	100%	100%	99%	97%	50%	-	-	-	-	-
15	100%	100%	99%	99%	75%	-	-	-	-	-
16	100%	100%	99%	99%	80%	-	-	-	-	-
17	100%	100%	99%	99%	85%	20%	-	-	-	-
18	100%	100%	99%	99%	90%	35%	-	-	-	-
19	100%	100%	99%	99%	95%	45%	-	-	-	-
20	100%	100%	99%	99%	97%	50%	-	-	-	-
21	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	75%	-	-	-	-
22	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	78%	-	-	-	-
23	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	80%	-	-	-	-
24	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	83%	-	-	-	-
25	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	85%	-	-	-	-
26	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	88%	-	-	-	-
27	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	90%	-	-	-	-
28	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	93%	20%	-	-	-
29	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	95%	30%	-	-	-
30	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	98%	40%	20%	-	-
31	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	45%	30%	-	-
32	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	50%	40%	20%	-
33	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	60%	45%	30%	-
34	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	70%	50%	40%	-
35	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	75%	55%	45%	20%
36	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	78%	60%	50%	30%
37	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	80%	65%	55%	40%
38	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	93%	70%	60%	45%
39	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	95%	73%	65%	50%
40	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	98%	75%	70%	55%
41	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	78%	73%	60%
42	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	80%	75%	65%
43	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	83%	78%	70%

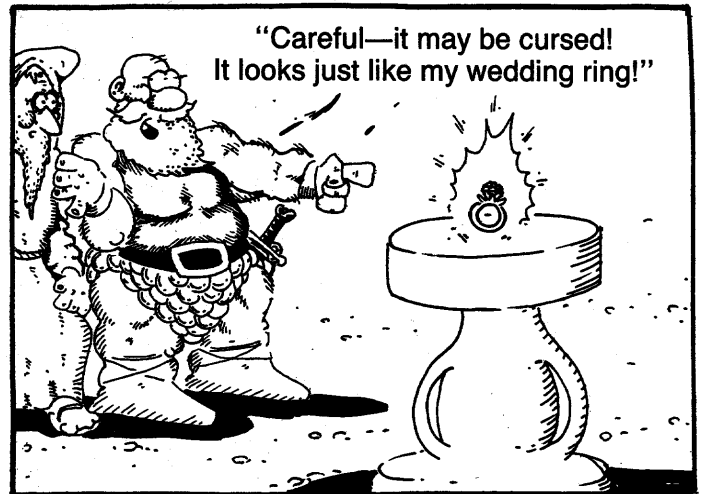
This chart is loosely based on information contained in *The Naval Aviation Guide*, by Capt. Richard C. Knott, USN.

**Table 6**  
**Naval Ranks (Officer and Enlisted)**

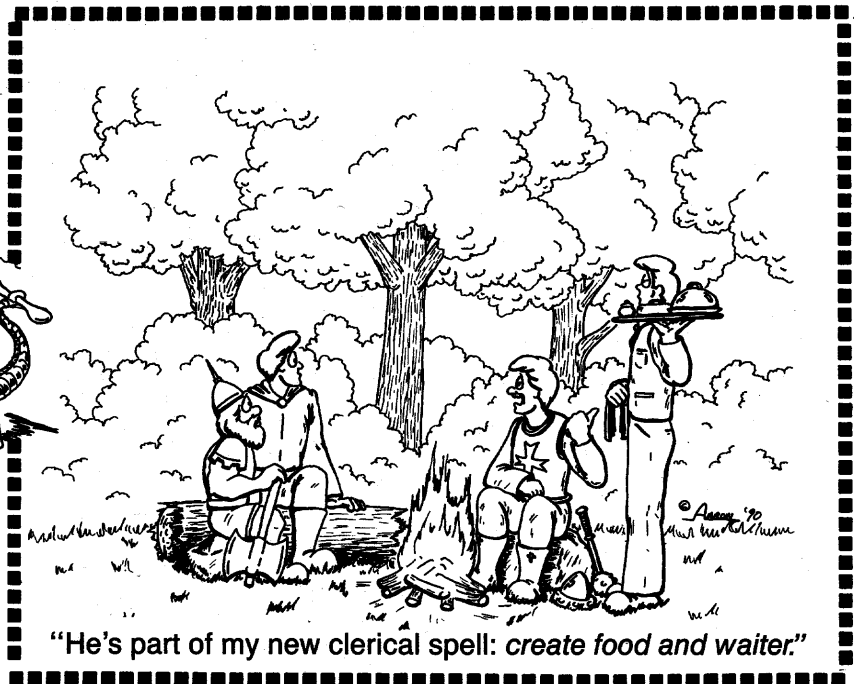
0-1 Ensign	E-1 Seaman Recruit
0-2 Lieutenant, j.g.	E-2 Seaman Apprentice
0-3 Lieutenant	E-3 Seaman
0-4 Lieutenant Commander	E-4 Petty Officer, 3d Class
0-5 Commander	E-5 Petty Officer, 2d Class
0-6 Captain	E-6 Petty Officer, 1st Class
0-7 Rear Admiral	E-7 Chief Petty Officer
0-8 Rear Admiral	E-8 Senior Chief Petty Officer
0-9 Vice Admiral	E-9 Master Chief Petty Officer
0-10 Admiral	

# DRAGONMIRTH

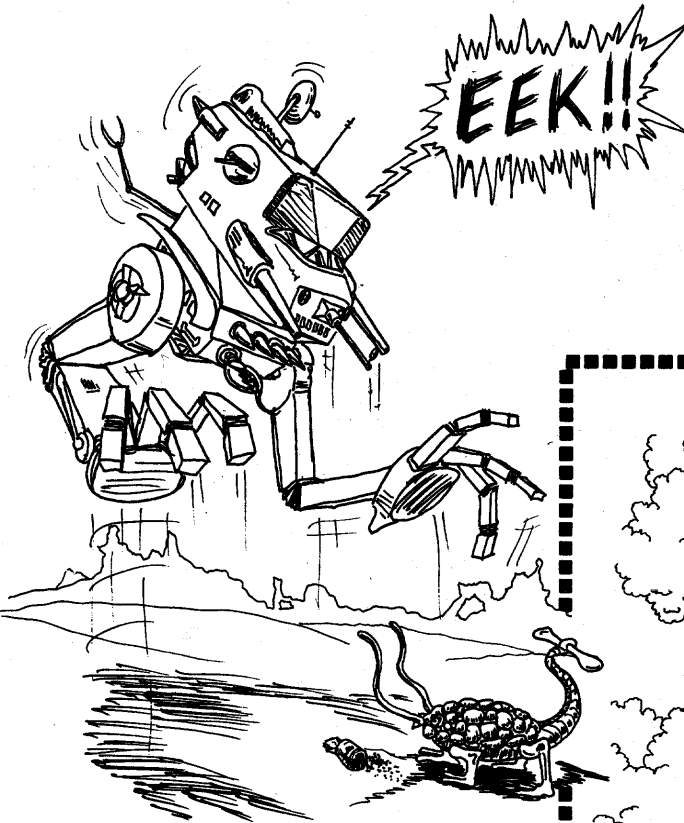
By Mark Doney



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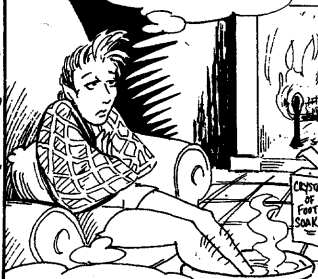


By Brian Monroe



*Gamer*

THE FRINN HAVE THEIR HEAD-PIECE. FEA IS FINALLY HAVING HER ALIGNMENT OVERHAULED. AND I... I HAVE BEEN PAID.



WHY, THEN, AM I OVERCOME WITH THE DREAD THAT I HAVE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING VASTLY IMPORTANT AND PERSONAL...

HONEY! I'M HOME!



WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO PUT MY THINGS, DARLING?

OGREK. WHAT CURSE AM I UNDER THAT YOU COULD SURVIVE THE COLLAPSE OF YOUR CASTLE...



SO DID ALL OF THE FURNITURE. WITHERS, SEND IN THE DOMESTIC HELP. CLIVE, BRING IN THE TAPESTRIES AND ARMOR FIRST.

I THINK WE CAN SQUEEZE MY FIRST BATTALION IN THE BACK ROOM. OH, AND THE CATAPULT WOULD LOOK FINE NEAR THE—





"Boy, I love it when they do the wave!"

By Walt Hackensmith



"That's their new wizard?"

By Michael Ferman



By Joseph Pillsbury

Siskel and Ebert in Ancient Rome

DRAGON 95





IT'S NOT FAIR!

I'M A GRIFFON, NOT A MAN.







**WRITING & COLORING**  
Stephen D. Sullivan

**ART**  
John M. Hebert

**LETTERING**  
Matt Mattick

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# ROBINSON'S WAR

PART 11



A SHORT TIME LATER...

NO NEW MEMORIES?

NOT MUCH SINCE THAT NIGHT  
IN YOUR CAVE.

I HAD A BRIEF FLASH  
EARLIER BUT THEN...

I SCOUTED THE SURROUNDING  
AREA.

I THINK IT'S SAFE  
TO CAMP HERE  
FOR TONIGHT.

THE HAG'S HUT ISN'T TOO MUCH FARTHER.

WE'LL MAKE A FRESH START IN  
THE MORNING.

I'LL TAKE FIRST WATCH.

GOODNIGHT ROBIN, FYNELLA, BILL.

NIGHT BRENNA, ROB...

... BILL.

HOPES NONE OF YOU SNOORE.

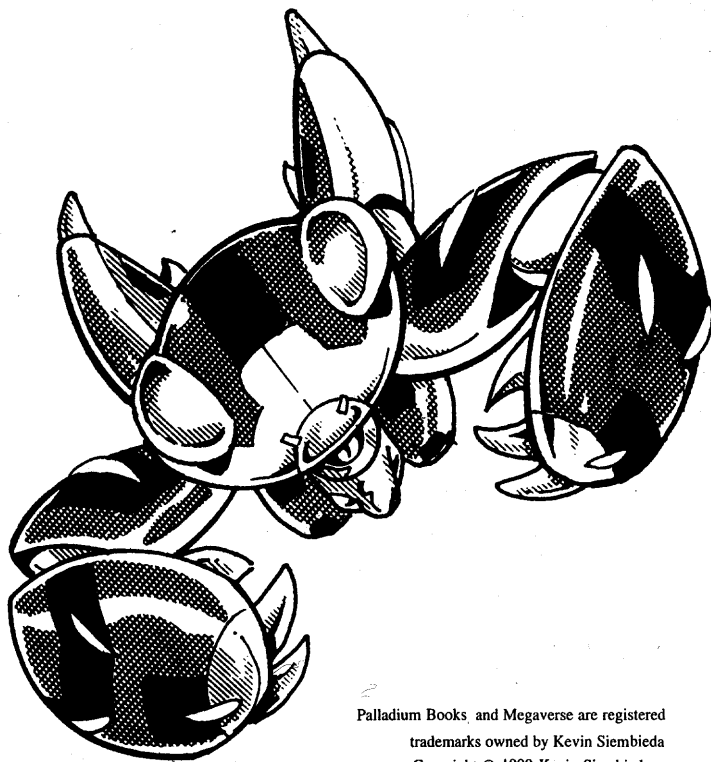
NIGHT ALL.

DAD?

TELL ME A STORY...

NEXT  
T10INGS  
of WAR





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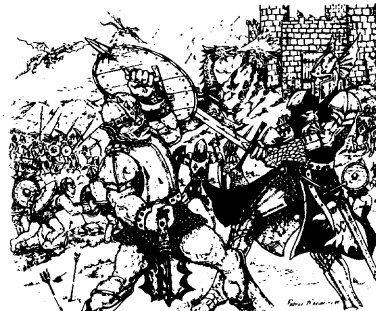
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# Through the LOOKING Glass

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Photography by Mike Bethke

## Doom bunny meets *The Hobbit*, and other miniatures fantasies



"Hands Off My Dragon" (Black Dragon Pewter)

Now that the winter is half over, it is time to get ready for the upcoming season of games conventions. Since this column is about miniatures, let's cover the cons that are important for miniatures players and buyers.

COLD WARS '91 will be held March 8-10, 1991, at the Penn Harris Hotel in Camp Hill, Pa. This premier miniatures event has grown each year and is put on by the Historical Miniatures Gaming Society-East Coast. Last year, over 125 games were played; while the vast majority were historical, GW's WARHAMMER 40,000\* and FASA's BATTLETECH\* games were also enjoyed. The HMGS people take great pride in their games and are more than happy to help you get started or to offer friendly pointers. If you want more information on this convention, contact: Mike Montemarano, 8808 Greens Lane, Randallstown MD 21133. Please mention that you read this column and that I sent you.

LITTLE WARS 1991 will happen April 26-28, 1991, at the Zion Leisure Center in Zion, Ill. The convention is sponsored by HMGS-Midwest, and yours truly has been drafted to put on this escapade. Last year, we had over 130 different types of games, from historical ancients to the PUPPY POUNDERS\* game put out by Inner City Games, which featured massive battles with stuffed animals. Included were several double-blind BATTLETECH\* games, both WARHAMMER 40,000\* and WARHAMMER FANTASY\* games, and TSR's BATTLESYSTEM™ rules for fantasy com-

bat. If you're anywhere within 500 miles, come and see the convention; hotels are inexpensive. Contact me at: 1411 Washington St., Waukegan IL 60085. I'll send you information or a judge's packet.

The 1991 GEN CON® games fair is coming on August 8-11, 1991. For information on miniatures events, contact: GEN CON Headquarters, TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A.

On to a more serious subject: Several of the people I have talked to lately have expressed the thought that common sense will prevail on the subject of the proposed ban on lead miniatures now before Congress (see "Through the Looking Glass" in issues #164 and 165). These people include some in the industry who should know better. This country runs on the democratic principle, but part of the principle is that those who raise the biggest fuss usually prevail, even if they are not in the majority. Environmental issues are popular at present (and they need to be), but this is often an emotional subject that does not take into consideration jobs, enjoyment, or merit. The miniatures industry is a very small part of the total bill in question, and

it is easier to overlook small areas than it is to take the time to modify the bill.

We all have responsibilities, and if we enjoy something, we need to take the responsibility to protect it, whether it be our nation's liberty, our honor, or something simple like our leisure times. You need to constantly be aware of things around you, lest someone elect to do the job for you. It is easier to regulate than to relate.

Now, on to the reviews.

### Reviews

#### Black Dragon Pewter

c/o Gallow Pewter Sculptures Corp.  
P.O. Box 290  
Mass NY 11758

#### #317— "Hands Off My Dragon" \* \* \* \* \*

Comedy is always welcome if done discreetly. Characters like the IRS audit clerk who preys on parties deep in the dungeon, or the court jester who springs into the party in a castle adventure, lighten up an otherwise serious and tense AD&D® game. But there is also humor in characters and scenes done in miniature, as this submission proves.

The title almost sums up the humor. The piece consists of three figures and a rough oval base. The pewter figures are done in 54 mm scale. The base is approximately 65 mm X 45 mm and depicts rough ground. Also on the base is a long, two-edged

#### Miniatures' product ratings

*	Poor
**	Below average
***	Average
****	Above average
*****	Excellent



Doom Bunny (Ral Partha)

sword; the blade is of a simple design and slightly bent.

The knight who owns the sword is also on the ground. He is armored from his plumed helmet to his jointed, metal-covered boots and flexible gauntlets. A full face protector is on his helmet, and he has a solid, one-piece breastplate. His shoulders and knee joints are adorned with ornate coverings where all the plates join together. The knight sits on the ground with his arms back, pushing himself up from a very embarrassing position.

Part of the embarrassment concerns the second figure in the trio. A princess stands over the fallen knight, with a glare on her face and her hands on her hips in an angry and defiant pose. A long scarf hangs from her hat, and her hair falls to her waist. She wears a full-length gown, complete with belt, pleats, and a low-cut bodice, and has a necklace with a pendant. The princess is considerably smaller than the knight, measuring only 42 mm tall.

The punch line of this joke is the third figure: a young dragon hiding behind the princess! The dragon has a scaly body with spinal ridges and leathery wings. Its tail is almost as long as its body and is coiled to the dragon's left side. The dragon's small forelegs are by the princess' shoulders, keeping her firmly in front of him. But the dragon's face tells it all! The dragon's horns look like the ears of a beagle sticking straight up, and the face has a woebegone, "why me?" look; its baleful eyes have bags under them. You can almost hear the dragon whimpering as the princess protects her pet!

This is an excellent figure and an almost guaranteed conversation piece; all the small details are easily seen. If you collect pewter, this is a good buy and worth its \$70 price tag. I heartily enjoyed the figure and am displaying it at my store.



The Antagonists (Ral Partha)

## Ral Partha Enterprises

5938 Carthage Court  
Cincinnati OH 45212

### Minifigs

1/5 Graham Road  
Southampton ENGLAND SO2 OAX

### Ral Partha Import WF-15— Doom Bunny

\*\*\*\*

This figure is one of several comedy figures released over the years by Ral Partha or Citadel, each designed to tweak your funny bone. The figure is of a 25 mm-scale humanoid figure with long, floppy ears that rise from the back of a full-face helmet. Its arms are bare and slightly hairy, held almost straight out from the shoulders. The right hand holds an axe with a carrot emblazoned on the head. Both wrists have armbands. On the left arm is a large, round shield with a carrot embossed on the front and wood showing on the back. Doom Bunny's legs are exposed but his bare feet do not look like a rabbit's feet. Overlapping metal strips extend front and back from neck to thigh. His belt buckle is a skull with rabbit ears. A knife hangs from his belt on the left. His hips and lower buttocks are exposed, and a large fluffy tail sticks out from his armor.

This figure is almost a carbon copy of one of the All-American Line orcs from Ral Partha, the major differences being the carrots on the axe and the shield, the ears, and the tail. The orc figure was probably modified and recast. This figure has limited uses in an AD&D game except as wizards guard or the leader of a chaos group, but you could use it for SJG's TOON\* game. You could probably use it in Chaosium's RUNEQUEST\* game, but you would be stretching it. If you have limited funds, use them elsewhere. The figure costs \$1.50 each.

### RP 10-450—The Antagonists \*\*\*\*

Ral Partha's combat-ready scenarios have been raising comments for some time. It started with the Chaos Wars hand-out, with army lists that could be made from individually purchased troops. Now it has progressed to packs of figures sold as armies that oppose each other or as self-contained antagonists.

The set submitted for review consists of four figures that form two distinct teams. The 25 mm-scale figures range from ones already assembled to those requiring extensive assembly of parts. The easy-to-follow assembly instructions have no printed instructions except for some common-sense suggestions on getting ready to work and on possible glues to use. The sketches do leave out such things as shield positioning on the villain.

In one corner is team #1, consisting of an evil dragon and an equally rotten rider. The dragon comes unassembled in 11 pieces. Each wing is 130 mm long, with heavily sinewed limbs, veins, a scaled joint, and leathery, upswept wings. The wings require extensive cleaning of their slots and wing posts to fit properly, and some filling must be done to get the wing joints to look right. The tail joins the rear of the body and needs minimal filling and cleaning, but needs plenty of time to dry as the joint is not deep. The tail has a set of aircraftlike elevators for flying, formed from spines and leathery skin. A line of overlapping scales almost like plate stretches from head to rear fins and from chest to tail. A saddle rests just forward of his wings. The spiny ridges behind the head and the upper half of the skull attach at almost the same spot; both could use filler, even after cleaning. The head is twisted back as if looking at something above and behind it. The feet and legs are all cocked except the front right, which goes straight down and





The Antagonists (Ral Partha)

forms the only front support. This dragon unfortunately falls over, so gluing it to a base would be a good idea.

The dragon's rider is in four parts: upper and lower body pieces, a weapon, and a shield. The two body halves fit fairly well with almost no filling needed. The rider could only be a demon, with deep-set eyes, rows of pointed teeth, a spined neck, and horns. The body is covered by either ribbed armor or an exoskeleton with built-in joints that extends from head to toe, showing a defined rib cage and legs; it might even be his natural skin. In his left hand is a large spiked club raised over his head, and on his right arm is a spike-edged shield. The major problem with this figure is that in order to use his weapon, the rider will hit his dragon first. You must bend his left hand around the club as well.

In the other corner are the good guys—or gal. This team consists of a female mage and her pegasus. The pegasus comes in two pieces: the body and the wings. The wings fit well into the body, but the top surfaces do not quite match up, the center being about 1 mm lower. If this is the case with your model, use a filler at the bottom of the body slot. The wings will then have a slight gap on the bottom sides that can be filled easily. The well-detailed wings measure 128 mm tip to tip along the front edges, with three different types of feathers and good vein detail. The equine body is muscular with good detail. The tail looks like it had been clipped in areas by a poor barber, but it curls out behind with individual hairs visible. The mane is well done, blowing in the same direction as the tail. Face, muzzle, and eye details are good.

The rider is a one-piece casting of a female, assumed to be a mage by its description. She has back-length hair blowing in the same direction as the horse's

mane and tail. Her arms and legs are bare except for a bracelet on her right arm. She wears boots rolled down slightly at their tops, a flimsy dress, and a sword on her right side. The topper is a long cape and hood that look like they were made of metallic fabric.

Unfortunately, no game statistics are included for any of the four participants. Working on straight AD&D game stats, and even assuming that the female mage is fairly high level, this could be the most lopsided battle since David and Goliath. It begins to become slightly more fair if you assume that the dragon rider is a demon and that the female is an ultra-high-level cleric. But never fear, good always triumphs—right?

This is a strange set that needs a scenario to make it truly usable for anything other than a diorama; as a diorama, it needs work to make it stable. I was not impressed with the dragon, as it did not live up to normal Ral Partha standards. This could be slightly overpriced at \$22.95.

*[Alert readers might recognize that these miniatures are based upon the Denis Beauvais painting, "The Antagonists," which served as the cover for DRAGON® issue #115.]*

### Thunderbolt Mountain Miniatures

P.O. Box 37024 Roselawn  
Cincinnati OH 45222-0024

### Thunderbolt Mountain Miniatures

70 Harcourt St.  
Newark, Nottingham  
UNITED KINGDOM NG 241 RF



Wizard and Halfling (Thunderbolt Mountain)

### #1006—Wizard and Halfling \*\*\*\*\*

Once upon a time, there was a famous book that made the word "hobbit" a household word. From this humble beginning grew the halfling of role-playing games, that kleptomaniac we all know and love. This halfling and wizard miniatures set was influenced by Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, and the figures share some similarities to personages from that book.

The set consists of two 54 mm lead figures and a base. The base measures 60 mm × 37 mm in size and 5 mm high. It has rounded and tapered sides with a brick cobblestone pattern on top; the blocks are all even with open mortared areas. On the floor is a bag with drawstring and an open book lying face down, with tightened bindings and engraving on the cover. There are also four holes into which the pegs on the feet of the figures fit. There was some easily removed flash and a barely visible mold line—nothing that could not be quickly fixed.

The halfling measures 33 mm in height. He has a pudgy face framed with short, tightly curled hair that exposes his ears but covers his neck. His face shows rapt attention, with his mouth open as if talking. His long-sleeved shirt has rolled-up sleeves, and his button-up vest has two front pockets and an open collar. In his right hand he holds a long-stemmed pipe. His baggy pants are tucking neatly into his spats, which are laced tightly from ankle to just below the knee. His feet are, of course, bare with hairy tops, with five well-detailed toes each.

The wizard is a much more complicated figure. This figure stands 47 mm tall, foot to eye. A wide-brimmed conical hat with a hatband covers his hair, which falls to just above his shoulders. His eyes are open and well detailed, right down to the irises,



APC (Stan Johansen)

eyelids, and eyebrows. The wizard's nose looks like it has been broken at least once. His beard is done in ringlets and falls past his waist. A simple cape is connected at his throat and drops to his ankles, covering a long coat over his robes. The robe is cinched by a simple belt and buckle, and is open from the waist down. The wizard grips his belt with his right hand; in his left hand he holds both a long-stemmed pipe and a gnarled oak staff that's as tall as he is. The staff is the one poor spot on this figure, as it is almost as wide as a board due to the molding process used. I recommend that it be carefully trimmed to present the proper appearance.

The set will invoke memories of *The Hobbit* and is a must for any collectors of Middle-earth material. There was almost no flash, and the mold lines on the figures are well camouflaged. The holes are slightly small for the pegs, so be sure not to open the holes too much. The price is very reasonable at \$16, and there is a \$1.50 shipping-and-handling fee if ordered by mail in the U.S. If you live in Ohio, add 5% sales tax.

## Stan Johansen Miniatures

3019 Nautical Way  
Lantana FL 33462

### 15 mm-3—APC

\*\*\*\*

Several months ago, we ran a review of a package of large fighting crab miniatures called krakons. But a number of people contacted me and said that they were unable to reach Stan Johansen Miniatures, the maker of these figures. The mystery has now been solved with the delivery of new samples: The company moved! Please note the new address and try again.

The sample submitted for review consisted of one vehicle and several accessory pieces. The tracked vehicle is solidly built, being 46 mm long, 22 mm wide, and 15 mm high. The truck assembly consists of five bogeys and a return and drive sprocket on each side. The treads are

molded as individual links differentiated by inscribed lines. Both tracks are protected halfway down by a solid single skirt having a slight bulge to the front.

The body is two tiered, with the front quarter consisting of a slightly sloped glacis that leads to a lowered deck covering the engine, which is covered by an engraved grill. The front lower deck also contains a set of headlights.

The upper deck's front slope contains a sighting device and vision port. The left side, looking from the back, contains a firing port, a loading hatch, and a flame thrower on a ball mount. The right side contains an access hatch, a flamer, a gun port, and a vent port. The rear consists of two hatches and two "options" holes.

The options consist of a large top hatch and a machine gun or a large turret with a "call it what you will" weapon. The large hatch allows you to make a vehicle that can be exited quickly and has either a remote-controlled or hands-on weapon. The large weapon's turret allows you to support other infantry vehicles at the cost of decreased troop capacity. The gun is nonspecific, so you can make up your own statistics for it, and the turret contains sighting and guidance knobs.

This vehicle was designed long ago for use with GDW's 15 mm TRAVELLER\* game figures or British 15 mm LASER-BURN\* units. With the increasing popularity of 6 mm epic-scale miniatures, this vehicle fits right in with the design of this genre. It could be used as an "old" Imperial land unit or as a weapon of the opposition, be it orks or renegade marines, from GW's WARHAMMER 40,000\* universe.

This vehicle has areas for other weapons to be mounted and can hold a huge number of troops.

This miniature has been out many years and may offend some of the purists who look for ultra-detail. It looks like what it is supposed to be: a quick, easy-to-assemble, easy-to-use weapon of war. At \$3.75 each, it is definitely a good buy for use in any number of scale systems.



Thrall Warrior (Lance & Laser)

## Lance & Laser Models

P.O. Box 14491  
Columbus OH 43214  
(Address incorrect in issue #164)

### T-002—Thrall Warrior

\*\*\*\* 1/2

Bard Games' CHRONICLES OF TALIS-LANTA\* system defines the thrall as a race of giant albino humanoids bred for use as slave warriors by sorcerers of some ancient land. The 25 mm figure submitted for review is made of lead, although not the same lead mixture that other companies use.

The figure measures an impressive 38 mm from his bald head to his toes. The face has high cheekbones, a sharp nose, and plenty of shallow-detail teeth in an open mouth. Large pointed ears jut out from his head. His right arm is bare except for a bracer, and his hand clenches a large sword, holding it up in the air. The scabbard is of a worn, metallic-type fabric, attached to belts that cross his front and back; the scabbards opening is over the right shoulder, leading to some questions as to how the sword is drawn. His left shoulder and arm are protected by spike-covered armor held on by straps and buckles. The rest of the body is covered only by a loincloth with a skull buckle and a belt, and various straps and buckles. The thrall's feet are clad in sandals supported by long straps and buckles.

The muscle detail is good if a bit angular, although some raised areas might be veins that normally stand out on a person who is straining. If they are meant to be veins, then the detail is very good although no obvious reason for straining is apparent. The metal in this figure also gave off a crystalline shine; be careful, as this usually means that the metal is brittle.

I recommend this figure, as it can be





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World War II ships (GHQ)

used in other game systems as well, such as an ogre in AD&D games. This figure is well detailed and worth \$1.35 for each one.

## GHQ

2634 Bryant Avenue South  
Minneapolis MN 55408

**IJN-15—BB Yamato, 1 each** \*\*\*\*\*  
**IJN-18—BB Nagato, 1 each** \*\*\*\*\*  
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**USN-09—DD Sumner, 3 each** \*\*\*\*\*

The huge battles that occurred in the Pacific during World War II had their beginnings in World War I. The Japanese government was among the Allies involved in the limited battles in the Pacific. When the Japanese demanded the German colonies located in the Pacific and China, the Allies gave them the islands, with some misgivings. The Japanese used these new possessions to launch future aggressions.

World War I also provided the platform that launched most of the major nations' new navies. This massive build-up created problems for the economies of many countries and led to the Washington Naval Treaty, which set limits on tonnage, both on the size of the ships and on the total naval tonnage per country. The Washington Naval Treaty, signed in 1921, gave Japan the right to have the third largest navy in the world, to cover its widespread Pacific interests. An associated treaty prohibited the U.S. and Britain from building large fortresses in the Philippines and Singapore. These agreements insured that the United States and Britain, even though they had the two largest fleets, would have unfortified positions of operation and would have to split their navies between the Atlantic and the Pacific.

The Japanese felt that this was important for several reasons. They had fought two major conflicts since the 1900 to de-

stroy powers that they thought posed threats to them. Russia fell fairly easily, although the Japanese had help from British ship designs. These battles in 1906 allowed Japan to regain access to vital resources and gain jump-off points that they capitalized on right up to the beginning of World War II.

Japan has long been a resource-poor nation, and resources have provided a basis for Japan's conquests for hundreds of years. Japan began to feel an oil pinch in the 1930s, and the steel it needed to build up its forces came from the United States. The Japanese naval high command cautioned against any conflict with the U.S. because of America's tremendous industrial potential. The navy felt that the U.S. could outbuild Japan.

But the Japanese navy was at the mercy of the army, which had set up a program of aggression and conquest. When the U.S. cut off all steel exports to Japan, the die was cast. Taking lessons from a British attack on the Italians, Japan planned to go to war with what resources it had. Pearl Harbor was an attempt to even the odds and reduce the U.S. fleet to levels that Japan could deal with. It was also an attempt to deny the U.S. its westernmost heavy operational base. As we know, the attempt failed, but at great human loss both then and over the next few years.

These models, submitted by GHQ for review, all represent ships that took part in this conflict. Let's look at the ships, compare them to their counterparts, and judge the models.

The *Yamato*-class battleships were the only modern battleships that the Japanese had for World War II. Built in 1937 and commissioned in 1941, these behemoths weighed over 70,000 tons fully loaded. They carried a main armament of nine 18" guns, the largest in service with any navy but also the slowest to fire. The deck was plank wood over 9" of steel. Each such ship could reach a speed of 27 knots, slow for this time, and was built for ship-to-ship combat at a time when such combat was becoming obsolete. The model for review represents the *Yamato* as it was launched, with a main secondary of twelve

6" guns. The model requires assembly and has simple, easy-to-follow line instructions. The deck has well inscribed planking with individual boards visible. Anchors, chains, and portholes are also visible, as are the bulges and protectors on the hull. There are two types of planes available, biplane and monoplane, both on catapult rails. The funnel adequately displays the steam pipes and covers, and the multilayer pagoda-like superstructure topped by the massive gun are well done. The mast is somewhat fragile, as are the gun barrels on the main and secondary guns. This figure is highly recommended as a display model or for use as an opponent to the U.S. battleships.

The U.S.S. *Missouri* was a member of the Iowa class of battleships, two of which are currently in service, albeit extensively rebuilt. These were the culmination of U.S. battleship designs with a speed of over 30 knots fully loaded. The ship's main armament of nine 16" guns were of smaller size than the *Yamato*'s but were about twice as fast to fire. Although not as heavily armored as the *Yamato*, the *Missouri* had armor set up in a layered fashion to provide more protection. These were the only battleships fast enough to keep pace with carriers and were armed to the teeth with antiaircraft guns. At 887', the *Missouri* was actually longer than the *Yamato*, but much narrower so she could fit through the Panama Canal. The model submitted for review captures most of the implied power of this ship. There are a wealth of AA positions in proper locations, and deck boards, chains, and anchors are all molded sharply. The model does have to be assembled, with the only visible trouble being the placement of the secondary armament, which takes steady hands. The wealth of detail also includes the floats on the Kingfisher aircraft and the aircraft crane. Spare parts are included, so if you make a mistake it is not as devastating as it could be. This model is highly recommended.

The U.S.S. *Tennessee* exists at the other end of the spectrum. Launched in 1919, this class mounted an impressive twelve 14"-gun platform. Her guns were in the open in casemates rather than in turrets with her tower control and cage masts. The ship moved at a slow 22 knots. In 1938, an update was done on the ships of her class. In 1941, the *Tennessee* and her sisters were at Pearl Harbor; the *Tennessee* took light damage and was rebuilt to the specifications with all-new conning towers, armor, and more AA guns. The model submitted for review shows the *Tennessee* as rebuilt after Pearl Harbor. Detail is excellent except that there are no portholes visible on the hull, but the deck planking is well done with extra parts included for aircraft. This is another assembly model, but it is easier to build than the *Missouri*. The conning tower and rear platform are also well done, as are the guns. There is no flash, except on one gun





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barrel from the main batteries.

The *Nagato* was launched in 1919 and stood as the cream of the Japanese battleship crop until the *Yamato* came along. She was armed with eight 16" guns and had a speed of 25 knots—a heavy, fast ship for that time period. This model reflects the *Nagato* after the 1934 rebuild, with a rebuilt pagoda-style conning tower and the elimination of one funnel. The model shows deck-mounted secondary guns that seem to be closed off in high seas. Wooden decking is visible, as are lifeboats and funnel screens with piping. Assembly is easy, and spare parts are included for the main guns. Aircraft are of two different types; you can choose the biplane (used early in the war) or the monoplane (used later on). You have to be careful when you transport these miniatures, as the seaplane pickup crane does get knocked off and no replacement is available. This was the only Japanese battleship known to survive World War II, but it was destroyed by an atomic-bomb test at the Bikini Islands.

*Northampton*-class cruisers were standard heavy American cruisers of the 1920s, all built under the terms of the Washington Naval Treaty, which restricted their weight to under 10,000 tons. These cruisers were armed with three turrets with three guns each and could move at 32.5 knots. Each was equipped with two seaplane scouts and could withstand hits

from 5" shells with minimal damage. This model represents the U.S.S. *Northampton*, rebuilt for war. Wooden decks, lifeboats, rafts, and open guns are all well done. This is another multipiece miniature and poses problems in seating the scout plane on the catapult, as the pegs need to be trimmed slightly. Also of note is the old-fashioned bedspring antenna on the forward mast. This ship did not survive the war, being sunk in 1942 during the Battle of Tassafaronga, by torpedoes from a Japanese destroyer.

Two *Tenryu*-class light cruisers were constructed in 1918 and had only light gun modifications and a mast change before World War II. These vessels were considered to be second-class cruisers even by Japanese standards, each being armed with only four 5.5" guns, three major AA guns, depth charges for antisubmarine work, and six 21" torpedoes. Their armor was light, and they could be brought to bay by late-war U.S. destroyers. This model is a one-piece casting, and the package represents both ships in the class. The guns have some flash under the barrels, but I advise that this be left alone to protect what would be a fragile gun mount. The tripod mast is clear with flash only at the top. The spacing is good, and individual depth charges and torpedoes are visible. Neither of these ships survived the war; both were sunk by submarines.

By 1944, the Japanese Empire was beginning to crumble. Valuable supplies and resources were not reaching Japan because of the active and intense submarine warfare waged by the U.S. Japan had already realized that its merchant marine was in danger, but had little material that could be used for ASW work and routine support. The *De Matsu* was a "second-class" destroyer but was actually closer to a destroyer escort. It was armed with depth charges, torpedoes, 24 light AA guns; and three 5"/40 guns in one casement and one dual open position. The ships were crewed with the largest possible number of men and had the simplest design possible. The miniature has clean lines, is a one-piece casting, and has no flash except at the mast tops. Deck planking is clear and sharp, as are lifeboats, weapons, directors, and bridgework. Also clear are the portholes toward the bow of the ship. The vessel is also small, being only 328' long (40 mm in actual length). Out of 18 active ships, seven were destroyed, one by a sub. The others were dispersed throughout the world.

Our last ship was a late U.S. entry: the *Summer*-class destroyer, launched late in 1943. By this time, the U.S. had begun to realize the value of destroyers that could come close to shore to fight and yet would do equal time in the radar picket lines defending against kamikaze pilots. These



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ships were almost twice the size of the *Matsu* and were each armed with six 5" guns, twelve 40 mm guns, eleven 20 mm guns, six 21" torpedoes, and depth charges. The projected maximum speed was 36.5 knots, but most of these ships were slower.

The model shows the twin turrets forward, the splinter shields on the sides, and the 40 mm and 20 mm positions clearly. Depth-charge racks are seen on the rear and sides of the boat, as are the two sets of torpedo tubes with their individual tubes and the gunnery turret. Gunnery radar and bridge radar are very well done, as is the bridge detail. The only noticeable item missing from this one-piece casting is the mast. Many of the class were sunk, but a few continue to serve in navies throughout the world today, although somewhat altered.

All of these vessels are molded in 1/2400 scale. Used together, they could produce an interesting late-war scenario for surface-to-surface combat. The U.S. has a slight edge that can be overcome by superior playing by the Japanese player, or by the addition of an *Aoba*-class light cruiser or a heavy cruiser to the Japanese player's forces. For rules, we recommend the *SEA POWER\** or (better still) the *SEEKRIEG\** game, both of which are available at many hobby stores. The ships may also be used for quality miniature dioramas. Admire the detail, be careful when you handle the miniatures, and game away. All of these miniatures are highly recommended.

I hope that this short lesson on World War II naval history gives you some feel for the combat of the time. The battles were desperate and bloody, and now you know some of the reasons why. The following references may be of use if you'd like more information:

*Con way's All the World's Fighting Ships, 1922-1946.* Conway/Maritime Press, 1980. Available through the U.S. Naval Institute Press.

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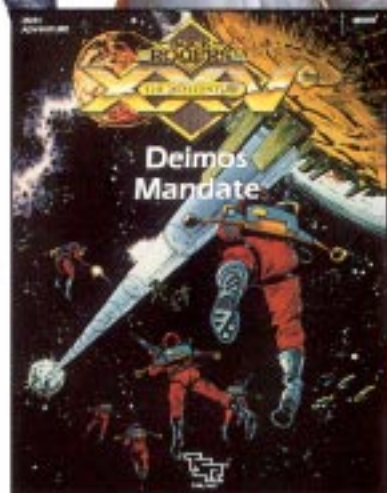


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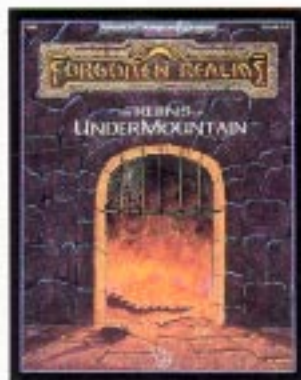
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